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Ancient Angels

Conceptualizing Angeloi in the Roman Empire

By

Rangar Cline

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated titles of journals and reference works are those recommended by the American Philological Association. For inscriptions, I have employed the sigla used by *L'Année épigraphique*, with the exception of the sign for "line change," for which I use a forward slash rather than a horizontal line. In the footnotes below, second citations contain the author and year of the work. Cited works are arranged in the bibliography according to author and year of publication. The critical editions of ancient texts are listed in the first citation.

ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AÉpigr	L'Année épigraphique
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology: The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America
BCH	Bulletin de correspondence hellénique
ByzZeit	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CahArch	Cahiers archéologiques
CIG	Corpus inscriptionum graecarum
CIJ	Corpus inscriptionum iudicarum
CRAI	Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres [Paris]
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
DACL	F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, Dictionnaire d'archéologie et de liturgie (Paris 1907–1953).
Délos	Exploration archéologique de Délos faite par l'École française d'Athènes
DIStr	Herrmann, Peter. (1998). Inschriften von Milet, Teil 2. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
EpigAnat	Epigraphica Anatolica. Zeitschrift für Epigraphik und historische Geograhie Anatoliens
GRBS	Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IG	Inscriptiones graecae
ILS	H. Dessau, ed. Inscriptiones latinae selectae (1892–1916)

JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. Stuart Jones, Greek-English Lexicon, 9th ed. (Oxford 1940).
MAMA	Monumenta Asiae minoris antiqua
PG	J. P. Migne, Patrologia graeca(Paris 1928–1936).
PGM	K. Preisendanz, et al., ed. Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri, 2nd ed., 2 vols. [3rd volume (index) unpublished]. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–4).
PL	J. P. Migne, Patrologia Latina (Paris 1879).
RA	Revue archéologique
RAC	Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum
SIG	W. Dittenberger, Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum (Leipzig 1883–)
TAM	Tituli Asiae Minoris (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1901–)
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphique

LIST OF EPIGRAPHIC SIGLA

[α]	Restoration of missing text
α	Probable restoration of incomplete text
[̇-]	Brief lacuna, uncertain characters
[—]	Longer lacuna, uncertain characters
[..]	Lacuna of two letters
/	Line change

PREFACE

Throughout the following study, I use the transliterated forms of the Greek word *angelos* (plural: *angeloi*) and its Latin equivalent, *angelus* (plural: *angeli*) when discussing ancient texts and inscriptions. I have chosen to use the Greek and Latin forms, rather than the standard English translation, "angel," in order to better illustrate the fluidity of meaning in the ancient terms. By maintaining the period-specific indigenous terminology I thus hope to avoid the imposition of an anachronistic terminological category. This approach is intended to more accurately reflect the religious views of the later Roman period rather than force such views to conform to religious and scholarly terminological categories of a later age, which would, by necessity, come laden with their own connotations and prejudices.[1] Because of the frequent use of the Greek word *angelos* throughout the book, I have chosen to use the transliterated form, rather than the preserve the Greek characters, in order to make the book more accessible to those readers who may be less comfortable with the Greek alphabet. Otherwise, when discussing specific Greek texts, I have opted to preserve the Greek alphabet and present the Greek text with an English translation.

Although there have been recent studies of angels in early Christian and early Jewish theology,[2] recent studies of the Christian representations of angels,[3] thorough studies of individual Christian archangels,[4]

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[1] On the problems related to value-laden taxonomy in Roman-era religion, see J. Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity," *ANRW* 2.16.1 (1978) 425–439.

[2] E.g., for early Judaism: Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1985); Saul Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993); for early Christianity: Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[3] Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Austin University of Texas Press, 2001; Cyril Mango. "Saint Michael and Attis," *Deltion tis Christianikis Etaireias* 12 (1984) 39–62.

[4] J. P. Rohland, *Der Erzengel Michael, Arzt und Feldherr, Zwei Aspekte des vor- und frühbyzantinischen Michaelskultes* (Leiden: Brill, 1971); W. Leuken, *Michael: Eine Darstellung und Vergleichung der jüdischen und der morgenländischen-christlichen Tradition vom Erzengel Michael* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1898).

and valuable (though dated) encyclopedic studies of angels,[5] this work is unique in its interdisciplinary approach to *angeloi* veneration as a religious practice common to several religious traditions in late antiquity contributing to what, in time, the Christian authorities defined as an orthodox cult of angels. The method of the present book is a departure from the approach of earlier studies that compared early Christian beliefs about angels with non-Christian and non-Jewish beliefs about various deities. Such early studies are perhaps best exemplified in G. F. Hill's 1916 article, "Apollo and St. Michael: Some Analogies."[6] Hill's method was to identify some of the features of cult of Michael the Archangel, namely that he was viewed as a healer, a causer of plague, and sometimes associated with springs, and point out that Apollo was also viewed as a healer, a causer of plague, and sometimes associated with springs. There are critical flaws in Hill's method. Perhaps most significant is the lack of attention that his study pays to chronology. For example, Hill compares stories of Apollo from the Archaic and Classical Periods with stories of the miracles of St. Michael from the early Byzantine Period, the late Middle Ages, and the Early Modern Period. Thus, Hill's study reveals a tendency—also found in the works of other scholars of his era—to ignore chronological context in religious comparisons, a tendency that has been fairly and thoroughly criticized by J. Z. Smith.[7] Implicit in Hill's argument is that somehow the cult of Michael absorbed some aspects of the cult of Apollo. However, Hill does not explain how this process worked, and pointing out that both Christian and pagans believed in the ability of supernatural beings to heal the sick and cause disease is not especially revelatory. Cyril Mango undertook this sort of comparison with more success in his1984 study of Michael and Attis.[8] Mango's study was concerned with specific sites and particular moments in history when Michael and Attis could be confused. Thus, by its attention to historical and geographic context, his study avoided some of the pitfalls of Hill's earlier work.

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[5] Henri Leclercq, "Anges," in *Dictionnarie d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Librarie Letouzey et Ané, 1924) Cols. 2080–2161; J. Michl, "Engel," in *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum* (1962) 53–258.

[6] G. F. Hill, "Apollo and St. Michael: Some Analogies," *JHS* 36 (1916) 134–162.

[7] J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 85–115.

[8] C. Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Deltion tis Christianikis Etaireias* 12 (1984) 39–62.

While Mango's study was better conceived and executed than Hill's, both represent variations on a similar method of studying angels in early Christianity: that of comparing a particular pagan deity with a particular Christian archangel. This book follows a different method. The present book examines the conceptualization and veneration of *angeloi* in various non-Christian and non-Jewish contexts from ca. 150 to ca. 450 CE and the reaction of Christian authorities to various conceptions of *angeloi* and different forms of *angelos* veneration and invocation. Thus, the present study's approach bears some similarities to that of Franz Cumont's 1915 "Les anges du paganisme"[9] or A. R. R. Sheppard's 1981 "Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor."[10] However, unlike Cumont's and Sheppard's studies, this book does not attempt to trace religious influence in one direction or another.[11] Nor does the book identify a corrupting outside influence on some pristine version of Christianity, Judaism, or one the Graeco-Roman religions, as other studies of late antique religion have attempted to do.[12] Rather, this study examines *angelos* veneration as a religious phenomenon in the Roman Empire that took different forms in different regions and different religious and cultural contexts at a particular time. The evidence, when examined in this way, reveals the widespread popularity of venerating and invoking entities called *angeloi* (Latin: *angeli*) in distinct and divergent religious traditions in the Roman Empire. This method of inquiry also reveals the manner in which a shared terminology for *angeloi* facilitated Christians' attempts to communicate their ideas about such beings to non-Christians and likewise complicated Christian attempts to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable forms of *angelos* veneration.

At every stage of this project, I have been asked by interested discussants some version of the following question: "What is the difference between angels and saints? Aren't they both called 'saint'?" In answer to this question: there are similarities between the cult of the saints and the veneration of angels. Some of those similarities are superficial, such as the title *hagios/sanctus*, "Saint" for the archangels. Others are

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[9] F. Cumon, "Les anges du paganisme," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 12 (1915) 159–182.

[10] A. R. R. Sheppard, "The Pagan Cult of Angels in Roman Asia Minor," *Talanta* 13/14 (1980/81) 77–101.

[11] For the particulars of their arguments, see pp. 48–53, below.

[12] For discussion and examples of this tendency, see Smith (1990) 1–53.

more significant, such as the intermediary role assigned to both angels and saints. In part because of this shared intermediary role, there are some ritual similarities between the early Christian veneration of the saints and the veneration of angels. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5, some locations were associated with angels and thus prayers to angels were considered to be more efficacious in those locations. There are also specific sites associated with the ritual power of the saints, as is well known. However there is an important difference between *angelos* veneration and the cult of the saints. The veneration of *angeloi* did not focus on physical remains of a person or the detritus of their earthly life, as angels were believed never to have existed in physical bodies. One exception to this observation appears to be the third-century invocation of the tutelary *angeloi* of particular men and women, who were associated with the graves of such persons, as discussed in Chapter 4. Peter Brown's classic study of the rise of the cult of the saints, and Kimberly Bowes's and Ann Marie Yasin's more recent studies of the relationship between relics, ecclesiastical politics, and church space illustrate that the physical remains of the saint's life were crucial for establishing the *praesentia* the saint.[13] The *praesentia* of angels was manifested in other ways, such as through natural springs, wells, fountains, and stories of angelophanies. In addition, the *praesentia* of angels could be effected through the proper ritual formulas, use of amulets, and inscribed invocations. In addition, as the following chapters illustrate, the veneration of *angeloi* existed in a number of distinct and divergent Roman-era religious traditions, including (but not limited to) Christianity and Judaism. Thus, while this is demonstrably not a study of the Christian cult of saints and martyrs, the following chapters present and discuss evidence for the ritual context in which such early Christian concepts and practices developed.

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[13] P. Brown, *Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 69–127; K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 84–96; A. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 151–239, et passim.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE WORDS OF ANGELS

On the Via Appia outside of Rome there is an extensive network of catacombs and tombs collectively called the Catacombs of Praetextatus, after an early Bishop of Rome. A visitor to the Catacombs of Praetextatus will find wall paintings that depict scenes familiar from Christian tradition, such as Christ with a crown of thorns and Susanna from the book of Daniel. The visitor will also find thousands of Christian burials and reminders of Christian suffering in the face of persecution. While quite remarkable, none of this would be too surprising for the visitor. This is what one expects to find in a Christian catacomb. However, if the visitor should journey nearby, to one of the older underground tombs built in the late second and third centuries, he or she could come upon the tomb of Vincentius and his wife Vibia. There, the visitor would see a depiction of the deceased Vibia being led to a banquet in the afterlife.[1] The visitor would also see a man identified by an inscription as an *Angelus Bonus*, or "Good Angel," leading Vibia to the feast. A first glance, the scene could be a Christian one; a figure identified as an *angelus* is leading a pious woman to a blessed afterlife. However, if the visitor looked more closely, he or she would notice that in other scenes Vibia is escorted by the god Mercury, and that her husband Vincentius is a priest of Sabazius. What at first glance appeared to be a Christian scene of angelic escort to the afterlife is in fact not Christian at all. The visitor might feel some confusion, as some scholars have when viewing the images. What is an *angelus* doing in a pagan painting? The confusion would be understandable because most viewers would associate such beings with Christianity and Judaism, or, in a later period, Islam.

Nevertheless, the images and the title *angelus bonus* are there, and there is other evidence for the belief in *angeli* in non-Christian

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[1] E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman World: The Archaeological Evidence from the Diaspora.* Volume 2 (New York: Bolingen, 1953) 45–50. Figures 839–844, contains discussion of the representations, with drawings of the tomb and paintings. More recent discussion in A. Ferrua, "La catacomba di Vibia," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 47 (1971) 7–62.

and non-Jewish contexts in the Roman era as well. The evidence comes from later Roman literary sources, artistic depictions like that described above, Greek and Latin inscriptions, engraved amulets, and inscribed votives. These objects are sometimes explicitly non-Christian, sometimes they may be Jewish, and sometimes they are religiously ambiguous, like the title *Angelus Bonus* in the Catacomb of Vincentius. Literary evidence indicates that there was considerable discussion among Roman-era philosophers concerning the nature of *angeli* (Greek: *angeloi*) and their relationship to a supreme god in the second century CE and afterwards. We know of this discussion from the texts of the philosophers themselves and from the works of Christian theologians who attempted to distinguish between orthodox Christian beliefs about *angeli* and the beliefs of their pagan opponents.

The literary and archaeological evidence indicates that *angeli* (*angeloi*) were a significant aspect of religion in the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, few readers will associate *angeli* with Roman religion. The present study attempts to change that by showing that such beings should be associated with later Roman religion. In order to do so, the following chapters present several case studies that examine the archaeological and literary evidence for *angeli* in later Roman religion and the manner in which Christian authorities sought to define orthodox Christian conceptions of *angeli* and establish the proper manner for Christians to call upon, pray to, or invoke an *angelus*. The study suggests that the prominence of *angeli* in early Christianity is due to the success of early Christian authorities in defining a system of orthodox Christian beliefs about, and attitudes towards, *angeli* that were distinct from non-Christian, and other Christian, beliefs about such beings.

Defining Angels

Before beginning a detailed examination of the evidence for the conceptualization and invocation of *angeli/angeloi* in the Roman Empire, it is necessary to discuss briefly the Greek word for angel, *angelos*, and its Latin transliteration, *angelus*. The word that later came to mean "angel" may seem like a term that needs little introduction. After all, many readers probably have some image in mind when they encounter the term, whether that image is a medieval depiction of the Archangel Michael slaying the dragon, or television's Michael Landon on an

American highway. While both of these images fall within the range of the ancient term, the Greek word *angelos* can mean other things as well. Quite simply, *angelos* means messenger. In origin, the term does not necessarily denote a celestial being. For instance, Homer (ca. 700 BCE) uses *angelos* to describe the (human) messengers sent to Achilles, as well as the Greek heroes Patroclus and Tydeus when they act as messengers.[2] Likewise, in the New Testament and Septuagint, the term *angelos* can refer to human messengers. For instance, the Gospel of Luke uses *angelos* to refer to the messengers of John the Baptist and the men that Jesus sent ahead of him to a Samaritan village.[3] Similarly, the Septuagint Genesis uses *angelos* to refer to the messengers that Jacob sent to his brother Esau.[4]

It is in this sense of a specific duty or task that Greek texts sometimes use *angelos* to describe the function of a particular deity or celestial being. For example, Homer calls the god Hermes an *angelos*, because he is a messenger who conveys the will of the gods.[5] Likewise, Homer describes the messenger goddess Iris as an *angele* (the Greek feminine form of angel).[6] In the case of Homer's use of *angelos*, the word describes the roles of Hermes and Iris as messengers charged with communicating between the gods of Olympus and humans. However, in Homer, Hermes and Iris do not belong to a separate class of celestial beings known as an *angeloi*. Rather, Hermes and Iris are gods who submit to the will of Zeus and deliver messages for him. In submitting to the will of Zeus, they are not different from other Olympian deities. The title *angelos* in Homer, and in other early Greek texts, does not denote a special type of being, but a specific role of gods and humans.

By the second century CE, non-Christian Greek authors began using the word *angelos* in a more specifically celestial sense, and in later

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[2] *Iliad* 1.334, human *angeloi* delivering a message to Achilles; *Il.* 5.804, used to describe Tydeus; *Il.* 11.651, describing Patroclus.

[3] Messengers of John the Baptist: Luke 7:24; Messengers to Samaritan village: Luke 9:52. Other NT references to human messengers as *angeloi* include James 2:25 and Mark 1:2–3. Cf. Judith 1:11.

[4] LXX Gen. 32:4. There are numerous other examples of the use of *angelos* in reference to a human messenger in the Septuagint. As in the example above, Greek *angelos* is a translation of the Hebrew *mal'ak*, which can also mean both a human and celestial messenger.

[5] *Odyssey* 5.29, where Zeus describes Hermes as an *angelos*.

[6] *Il.* 2.786.

Roman texts and inscriptions, the word could denote a special class of celestial beings. As the case studies in the following chapters illustrate, *angelos* could describe a semi-divine being or a lesser god in the service of a supreme god, a manifestation of a supreme god, the soul after death, or even a guardian spirit. As such, these beings were conceived of as being different in nature than a supreme deity, or the deity they served. These meanings of *angelos* are similar to the meaning of "angel" and "angel of God" in biblical texts and Jewish and Christian literature.[7] Because non-Christians used the Greek word *angelos* in ways similar to that of biblical texts, Christian apologists attempted to distinguish between the pagan and Christian meanings of the word. Their arguments, and those of their pagan opponents, are indicative of the semantic range of the spiritual meaning of *angelos* in the period. The pagan-Christian discourse on the meaning of *angelos* and related terms is best exemplified in the writings of Origen of Alexandria, a pre-Nicene apologist in the Greek-speaking Eastern Empire, and Augustine of Hippo, a Nicene theologian in the Latin West. A brief survey of their arguments here will help to demonstrate the multiple religious meanings *angelos* in the period and assist in understanding the evidence for *angelos* invocation in the following chapters.

Origen of Alexandria

Origen of Alexandria's *Contra Celsum* (ca. 248) contains one of the earliest attempts to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian concepts of *angeloi*. Origen's discussion of the Christian meaning of *angelos*, demon (*daimon*), and related terms is in the context of his defense of Christianity against the attacks of the philosopher Celsus.[8] For Origen, the conflict with Celsus over the meaning of the terms *angelos* and *daimon* arose when Celsus attempted to interpret (and discredit) Christianity based on these terms. Although Celsus' polemic against Christian beliefs has not survived, one can reconstruct large

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[7] E.g. Angel of God (*Theos*) Gen. 28:12, 32:1; Ex. 14:19; 1 Sam. 29:9; Matt 22:30, Mark 12:25; Luke 12:8–9; Acts 27:23; Heb 1:6. Angel of the Lord (*Kyrios*): Gen 16:7; 22:11; Ex. 22:32; Jud. 13:18; 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chr. 21:15; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:24, 28:2; Acts 2:9; 5:19; 8:26; 12:23.

[8] For dating the *Contra Celsum*, see H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge University Press, 1953) xiv–xv.

portions of his argument from Origen's response.[9] Celsus' work, the *True Doctrine*, was composed between 177–80, some sixty years prior to Origen's response.[10] Celsus approached Christian theology from the perspective of the predominant philosophical concepts and language of his own day, that of Middle Platonism.[11] One of the problems that Celsus found with Christianity was the belief that a god, or even a son of a god, could come to earth, as this violated certain philosophical beliefs about the separation of the divine and material worlds. Thus, Celsus suggested that when Christians describe a god coming to earth, they refer to an *angelos*; he suggested further that the particular type of *angelos* they refer to was probably a *daimon*.[12]

Significantly, Celsus' statement reveals that Christians and non-Christians were using the same terms to describe similar theological concepts. Celsus terms the spiritual beings who could span the distance between heaven and earth *angeloi*. Celsus also used another word that would be familiar to Christian readers, *daimon*, usually translated as "demon." However, for Celsus and most readers in the second century, the word *daimon* did not have the pejorative meaning that it has in the biblical texts, where servants of Satan are regularly called "demons" (Greek: *daimones/daimonia*).[13] Rather, Celsus used the word *daimon* in the same manner that it is used in Plato, where it describes a celestial being that can exist in heavenly and early realms, and is specifically charged with connecting heaven and earth.[14] This

[9] See R. Joseph Hoffmann, *Celsus: On the True Doctrine* (Oxford University Press, 1987), which reconstructs Celsus' text based on the fragments in Origen.

[10] The date of Celsus' work is difficult to determine precisely. However, most scholars place the work in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Chadwick (1953) xxiv–xxix, upon survey of various arguments, suggests 177–80.

[11] Although Celsus' philosophy is generally that of a Platonist, he is sometimes identified with the Epicurian Celsus, a friend of Lucian of Samosata. See Chadwick (1953) xxiv–xxvi.

[12] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.2. For Greek text, see M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse.* Vol. 3, *SC* 147 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 16–8.

[13] E.g. Matt. 8:29–31, 11:18, 17:18, Mk. 3:22–23, 7:26; Lk. 4:35–36, 8:30–31, 11:15, Jn. 8:48–49, 10:19–21; 1 Cor. 10:21–22; 1 Tim. 4:1, Jas. 2:19; Rev. 9:20, 16:14, 18:2. The New Testament uses the diminutive form *daimonion* almost exclusively. One exception to the NT use of *daimon/daimonion* to denote an evil servant of Satan is *Acts* 17:18, where philosophers at Athens describe Paul as a preacher of foreign "divinities," for which *Acts* uses *daimonia* apparently in the neutral sense that it has in other Greek literature of the period.

[14] Description of function of daemonic intermediaries in *Symposium* 201e–204a; see also *Timaeus* 41–2, 90a; for Middle Platonic daemonology, see John Dillon, *The*

is the platonic concept that Celsus finds to be closest to the Christian idea of Jesus the Messiah as the incarnate God.

Celsus' goal was to demonstrate the philosophical inconsistencies in Christian beliefs. Origen's response was to restrict the meaning of terms such as *angelos* and *daimon*. According to Platonists, *daimones* could be evil or good, just like men.[15] However, Origen argued, based on biblical references, that *daimones* are exclusively evil, while *angeloi* are good, stating that Christians have learned that the gods of the Gentiles are *daimones* in search of sacrifices and blood, while the "divine and holy *angeloi* of God are of a nature and character other than that of the daemons on earth."[16] Origen also elaborates on the difference between *angeloi* and *daimones* when responding to Celsus assertion that one ought to pray and sacrifice to *daimones*.[17] According to Origen:

> Since there are both good and bad men, for this reason some are said to be men of God and some of the devil; so also some *angeloi* are said to be of God and some of the Devil. But the twofold division no longer holds good in the case of *daimones*; for they are all proved to be bad.[18]

Origen's comment that a two-fold division of good and evil *daimones* no longer holds reveals a great deal about the debate over the meaning of that term and *angelos* in the dialogue between Christians and non-Christians. Origen's statement implicitly acknowledges that the term *daimon* did not exclusively mean an evil spirit. Rather, among the Hellenes of the later empire, the term was neutral as it had been for centuries. However, Origen is refusing to argue on the same terms as Celsus, and he asserts, on Christian authority, that all *daimones* are evil. Celsus had argued that *daimones* were responsible for maintaining certain aspects of nature, such as water and air.[19] But Origen insists

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Middle Platonists (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) 24–33, on Xenocrates; 168–73, on Philo; 214–23, on Plutarch; and 315–25, on Apuleius.

[15] As stated by Xenocrates, see Dillon (1977) 31–2.

[16] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.37. Trans. Chadwick (1953) 153. Greek text: M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*. Vol. 2, *SC* 136 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967) 86–90. Paul equates Gentile gods with demons at 1 Cor. 10:20.

[17] Ibid., 8.25.

[18] Ibid., 8.25. Trans. Chadwick (1953) 470. Ἐπεὶ οὖν καὶ ἄνθρωποι οἱ μέν εἰσι σπουδαῖοι οἱ δὲ φαῦλοι, διὸ καὶ οἱ μὲν <τοῦ θεοῦ> οἱ δὲ τοῦ διαβόλου εἶναι λέγονται, ἀλλὰ καὶ <ἄγγελοι> οἱ μὲν <τοῦ θεοῦ> οἱ δὲ τοῦ πονηροῦ, δαίμονες δὲ οὐκέτι διχῶς, πάντες γὰρ ἀποδείκνυνται εἶναι φαῦλοι· Text after M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*. Vol. 4, *SC* 150 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 228–30.

[19] *Contra Celsum* 8.31. Greek text: M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*. Vol. 4, SC 150 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 240–2.

on a Christian definition of terms, stating that *daimones* cannot be responsible for anything good. Thus, Origen states that the *angeloi* of God are responsible for good natural phenomena, such as rain and un-polluted air, while *daimones* are responsible for the evils of nature, such as famine, barren vines, drought, and plague.[20]

According to Origen, Celsus questioned the Christian idea that God could come to earth, stating, "If it is certain *angeloi* of which you speak…whom do you mean by them, gods or someone else?"[21] Origen understood Celsus' criticism of Christianity to imply that *angeloi* and gods could be the same. The full context of Celsus' statement indicates that he made a distinction between *angeloi* and a supreme God. Celsus states that "no God or child of God has come down," whereas he allows that *angeloi* could come down to earth. It appears then, that Celsus made a distinction between a supreme, transcendent God, who would not come into the material world, and lesser divinites, called *angeloi* or gods, who could. Such a view would be consistent with Middle Platonism. However, Origen infers that Celsus equated God and *angeloi*, and he took the opportunity to further clarify his Christian understanding of both. He argued that although *angeloi* are sometimes called gods (*theoi*), this is because of their divine nature and not because Christians ought to pay them reverence or worship them.[22] Origen adds that Christians should not worship *angeloi* but follow the example of such creatures' devotion to God.[23] He also states that Christians should not pray to *angeloi*, but send all of their prayers through the "high priest of the *angeloi*," the divine Logos.[24] Origen attempts a clear distinction between *angeloi* and God, but he implicitly acknowledges that there could be some confusion, as scriptures use the term *theoi* "gods" to refer to *angeloi*, and the pious might be tempted to worship them. Celsus' critique, and Origens' rebuttal,

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[20] *Contra Celsum* 8.31.

[21] *Contra Celsum* 5.4. Trans., Chadwick (1953).

[22] Ibid., 5.4. Greek text: M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*. Vol. 3, *SC* 147 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 20–2. As Chadwick (1953) 266, notes, angels (or other divinities) appear to be described as *theoi* at Ps. 49:1 and 95:4 (LXX).

[23] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.4. Τούτους δὴ ἀγγέλους ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔργου αὐτῶν μεμαθηκότες καλεῖν, εὑρίσκομεν αὐτοὺς διὰ τὸ θείους εἶναι καὶ θεοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς ποτε ὀνομαζομένους γραφαῖς, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥστε προστάσσεσθαι ἡμῖν τοὺς διακονοῦντας καὶ φέροντας ἡμῖν τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τοὺς διακονοῦντας καὶ φέροντας ἡμῖν τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ σέβειν καὶ προσκυνεῖν ἀντὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. Text after M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*. Vol. 3, *SC* 147 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 20–2.

[24] *Contra Celsum* 5.4. Trans. Chadwick (1953) 266.

reveal the semantic overlap of the terms *angelos, daimon*, and *theos* in the second and third centuries. Origin's articulation of a more rigid distinction among these terms lays the foundation for later Christian definitions and is indicative of the importance of such disambiguation for Christian authorities.

Augustine of Hippo

The following chapters will examine several examples of Christian authorities distinguishing an orthodox Christian conception of *angeloi* from other Christian and pagan ideas about *angeloi*. However, as an introduction to the parameters of the debate, Augustine's *City of God* can serve as an example of how a Nicene theologian in the Latin West distinguished between Christian and pagan ideas about *angeli*. Augustine, in a manner similar to Origen, challenged his Platonist opponents' use of the terms *angelus* and *daemon*.[25] Augustine's argument is primarily based on references to Christian scripture. However, Augustine also appealed to the popular use of the terms. Augustine's discussion of the terms suggests that by the early-fifth century an earlier, non-Christian understanding of these terms was giving way to a Christian one, and inherent in Augustine's argument is the position that the Christian understanding of the terms is dominant in popular and literary usage.

Augustine attempted to maintain a restricted, Christian definition of *angelus* and *daemon*, while at the same time acknowledging that philosophers, in particular Porphyry, Apuleius, and Cornelius Labeo had utilized similar, but divergent, definitions of these words. In so doing, Augustine argued that *daemones* and *angeli* are not the same thing, and he based his argument on an appeal to Christian scripture. This is best characterized in Augustine's refutation of Cornelius Labeo:

> Since some demonolaters, to coin a term, including Labeo, claim that those they call demons are identical to those called angels by others, I

[25] Augustine, like other Latin theologians, uses the Latin transliterations of the Greek *angelos* and *daimon: angelus* and *daemon*. On Augustine's angelology in general, see F. Van Fleteren, "Angels," in *Augustine through the Ages,* ed. A. D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 20–2. For a survey of the relationship between Augustine's angelology and the later Roman angelology and daemonology, see Jean Pepin, *Ex platonoricum persona: Études sur les lectures philosophiques de Saint Augustin* (Amsterdam: Hackert, 1977) 29–37. On the role of angels in Augustine, see G. R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 98–111.

> declare that I must say something about the good angels. Our opponents do not deny their existence, but they prefer to call them demons rather than angels. For our part, we abide by the language of scripture, which is the basis of our Christian belief. And there we read of good and bad angels, but never of good demons.[26]

The passage above illustrates several aspects of the debate over religious terminology. Augustine's statement acknowledges that non-Christians had used the word *angelus* in place of *daemon*, and vice-versa. However, Augustine states that Christians cannot use it so, because the word *daemon*, and its cognates, are always negative in Christian scripture. Augustine goes further, however, and argues that the biblical distinction between these terms was also found in popular usage, stating:

> In fact, wherever this name is found in the books of the Bible, whether in the form *daemones* or in the form *daemonia*, it always refers to malignant spirits. And this way of speaking has been so generally adopted, that even among those who are called pagans, who maintain that it is right to worship many gods and demons, scarcely anyone would be so literary and pedantic as to bring himself to say, even to his own slave, by way of a compliment, you are possessed of a demon…By using the word angel we can avoid the shock that using the word demon is likely to produce.[27]

Augustine states that only a pedant (perhaps one should read here "Platonist") would insist that *daemon* could have a positive meaning. According to Augustine, in popular usage the meaning of the word had changed, such that people would be confused if he were to speak positively of *daemones*. This statement signals a change in the popular

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[26] *Civ. Dei* 9.19. Sed ne verbis etiam nos certare vediamur, quoniam nonulli istorum, ut ita dixerim, daemonicolarum, in quibus et Labeo est, eosdem perhibent ab aliis angelos dici, quos ipsi daemons nuncupant, iam mihi de bonis angelis aliquid video disserendum, quos isti esse non negant, sed eos bonos daemons vocare quam angelos malunt. Nos autem sicut scriptura loquitur, secundam quam Christiani sumus, angelos quidem partim bonos, partim malos, numquam vero bonos daemons legimus. Text after B. Dombard and A. Kalb, *sancti Aurelii Augustini episcopi*: *de civitate dei* (Leipzig: Tuebner, 1928; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981). Trans. Bettenson (1972, adapted).

[27] Sed ubicumque illarum litterarum hoc nomen positum reperitur, sive daemones, sive daemonia dicantur, non nisi maligni significantur spiritus. Et hanc loquendi consuetudinem in tantum populi usquequaque secuti sunt, ut eorum etiam, qui pagani appellantur et deos multos ac daemones colendos esse contendunt, nullus fere sit tam litteratus te doctus, qui audeat in laude vel servo suo dicere: "Daemon habes;"…cum possimus angelorum nomine adhibito eandem offensionem, quae nomine daemonum fieri poterat, evitare. *Civ. Dei* 9.19. Trans. Bettenson (1972) adapted.

connotation of the terms, perhaps influenced by Christian, scripture-based usage of the terms *angelus* and *daemon*.

Augustine does, however, acknowledge some truth in the philosophers' claim that there are both good and bad *daemones* and *angeli*, while simultaneously rejecting their equation of the terms. Most revealing is in this matter is Augustine's attack on Porphyry's endorsement of theurgy.

> For [Porphyry's] belief corresponded more or less to what we hold, but he did not defend his opinions without reserve against the worship of many gods. He alleged in fact that there are two classes of angels: the one sort come down from above and reveal divine prophecies to men who practice theurgy, while the others are those who make known on earth the truth about the father, his height, and his depth.[28]

If Augustine's paraphrase of Porphyry is accurate, then one can understand the manner in which Neoplatonists like Porphyry used the term *angelus* as a functional equivalent to the Platonic *daemon*. Rather than discredit Porphyry's view, Augustine endorses it, but with significant caveats. Augustine states that Porphyry was correct in stating that there are two types of *angeli*. However, Augustine's "Dear Philosopher" failed to see that those *angeli* who reveal prophecies to men who practice theurgy were, in fact, unclean spirits, whom Augustine prefers to call *daemones*.[29] Those *angeli* whom Porphyry claimed could reveal the truth about God to men are, in Augustine's terms, the "*Boni Angeli*," in other words, the *angeli* of the Christian God.

Similar sentiments can be found elsewhere in the *City of God*, where Augustine does not wholly discredit the Platonic system of *angeli* and *daemones* but claims the philosophers have either mislabeled or misunderstood the functions of these beings. For instance, Augustine distinguishes between the "Good *Daemones*" of the pagans, responsible for spiritual matters, and other *daemones,* who are in fact unclean and malignant spirits. About these other *daemones*, Augustine states, in an argument aimed at Apuleius, that *daemones* are not fit for humans to

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[28] *Civ. Dei* 10.26. Nescio quo modo, quantum mihi videtur, amicis suis theurgis erubescebat Porphyrius. Nam ista utcumque sapiebat, sed contra multorum deorum cultum non libere defendebat. Et angelos quippe alios esse dixit, qui deorum descendentes hominibus theurgicis divina pronuntient; alios autem, qui in terris ea, quae Patris sunt, et altitudinem eius profunditatemque declarent. Text after Dombart and Kalb (1928). Trans. Bettenson (1972).

[29] Ibid.

emulate,[30] nor are they capable, as Platonists maintained, of communicating between the human and divine.[31] Lest anyone be tempted to worship these good *daemones*, Augustine warns against it, stating that while the Platonists may prefer to describe the *angeli* as gods, Christians understand that the *angeli* are created beings and act only on the authority of God.[32] Thus, *angeli* are not proper objects of Christian worship.

To summarize Augustine's views, he argues that the term *daemon* should only be used in a negative sense, but he acknowledges that the term *angelus* can describe either a good or and evil being. Augustine identifies the "good daemons" of the Platonists with the *angeli* of the Christian God. In order to avoid confusion, Christians should not describe those *daemones* that the Platonists honor with sacrifices and bend to their will with theurgic rituals as *angeli* because they are, in fact unclean spirits, which Christians should call *daemones.* One may infer from Augustine's discussion of angelic and demonic terminology that while the word *angelus* can be used to describe a minister of the Devil, a negative qualifier should always accompany it; whereas the term *angelus* without adjectival modification should be used only for the ministers of God. Augustine's statements offer a clear articulation of Nicene views about *angeli* and *daemones* and the relationship between such beings and the Christian God. In this view, such beings are created, of a nature different than God, and unfit for worship.

Augustine's and Origen's articulation of the Christian conception of *angeli* and *daemones* vis-à-vis pagan beliefs about celestial intermediaries can serve as an introduction to the ways in which Christians articulated their own beliefs about such beings in the context of other religions in the late antique Mediterranean. Of course, their statements do not provide a complete picture of Greek and Roman beliefs and religious practices, nor do they describe the variety of Christian and Jewish beliefs about *angeli, daemones*, and God. However, their expressions of Christian angelology will serve as a reference point as we examine the archaeological and literary evidence for *angeli* (Greek: *angeloi*) in later Roman religion and the Christian reactions to potentially heterodox practices of invocation.

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[30] Civ. Dei 6.4
[31] *Civ. Dei* 8.17–18.
[32] *Civ. Dei* 11.9; 11.19.

Hellenism, Monotheism, and Polytheism

In addition to the word *angelos*, this study explores the meanings and limits of other terms, such as Hellenism, pagan, monotheism, and polytheism. Because scholars use these terms in different ways, I want to establish, in general, how these terms are used in the following pages. This book's examination of literary and epigraphic material considers the manner in which Hellenism allowed distinct religious traditions to communicate similar religious ideas about angels through the medium of the Greek language. In so doing, I hope that this study provides additional evidence for Glenn Bowersock's arguments concerning the function of Hellenism in late antiquity.[33] As one scholar has recently noted, Bowersock's essays on the function of Hellenism are brilliant, but not always thorough or meticulous.[34] It is hoped that the present study of Greek *angelos* inscriptions will, among other things, contribute to the further testing of Bowersock's brief but influential essays on Hellenism. Bowersock defined Hellenism in the following manner:

> Hellenism, which is a genuine Greek word for Greek culture (*Hellênismos*), represented language, thought, mythology, and images that constituted an extraordinarily flexible medium of both cultural and religious expression. It was a medium not necessarily antithetical to local or indigenous traditions. On the contrary, it provided a new and more eloquent way of giving voice to them.[35]

Bowersock's contention that Hellenism did not necessarily crush local traditions but gave them a "more eloquent" and more cosmopolitan form of expression contrasts sharply with the views of other scholars such as Fergus Millar, who suggested that Hellenism was, in general, a force that suppressed local religious traditions through "Hellenization."[36]

Bowersock briefly commented that one example of the ways in which Hellenism worked to give local religious traditions a cosmopolitan language was angel invocation. He noted, and briefly described,

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[33] G. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) 1–28.

[34] P. Athanassiadi, "Review: L'Orient Romain; A Chronicle of the Last Pagans; Hellenism in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 82 (1992) 286–7.

[35] Bowersock (1990) 7.

[36] Fergus Millar, "Empire, Community and Culture in the Roman Near East: Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabs," *JJS* 38 (1987) 162.

the example of a Greek inscription from Syria that invokes a Semitic angel-god by the Greek term *angelos*.[37] He also noted the existence of dedications to "angel-gods" at Stratonikeia in Caria.[38] Bowersock's theory that the Greek language was able to provide a common means of expression to regional, linguistically dissimilar, cults of *angeloi* was suggestive. However, the limited scope of his study did not allow him to fully explore the numerous cases of *angelos* invocation found on Greek inscriptions throughout the Mediterranean. The present study attempts to rectify that situation. The inscriptions cited by Bowersock are examined in the chapters that follow, along with many more pagan, Christian, and Jewish *angelos* invocations that illustrate, as Bowersock suggested, that the Greek language gave linguistically and religiously diverse traditions of *angelos* invocation and veneration a means of universal expression. This book explores the consequences of such universal expression for later Roman polytheism and its relationship with early Judaism and early Christianity.

This study examines non-Christian and non-Jewish inscriptions that refer to *angeloi*. These inscriptions offer information about the role of *angeloi* in later Roman polytheism and they record prayers and dedications to *angeloi*. In some contexts, this study uses the term "Hellenic" to describe these inscriptions as well as the religious groups associated with the inscriptions. This meaning of the term is almost same as the modern sense of "pagan," but not exactly. As several scholars have noted, from the early fourth century and afterwards, Christians and pagans used *Hellenos* and its adjectival form *Hellenikos* to describe traditional Greco-Roman, Syrian, Egyptian, and Arabic religious practices.[39] Hellene came to equal, and then replace, the term *ethnikos* (*gentilis*) as the term for non-Christians in the dialogue between Christians and polytheists. However, Hellene also means "Greek," "Greek-speaking," or, more generally, "a participant in Greek language and culture." Hellene and Hellenic are therefore more ambiguous than "pagan." However, the term conveys important aspects of later Roman polytheism

[37] Bowersock (1990) 30–1.
[38] Bowersock (1990) 19–20.
[39] See Bowersock (1990) 9–10 and T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople: Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997) 29–30, 89–92, for further discussion and references. For a succinct commentary on the difficulty of collectively naming the religions of the Greco-Roman world, see J. A. North, *Pagans, Polytheists, and the Pendulum*, in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) 134–7.

which the present study seeks to examine. For example, this book examines polytheist *angelos* dedications written in Greek from several regions of the later Roman Empire where indigenous languages continued to exist. One of the common elements in these pagan inscriptions is their use of the Greek language and the Greek term *angelos* to express religious devotion. "Hellenic" thus describes a shared aspect of inscriptions that most often reflect distinctly regional cults.

The problem with using "Hellenic" to mean non-Christian or non-Jewish is, of course, that the Greek language was also what united much of eastern Christianity as well as Hellenized Judaism. The problem inherent in separating Hellenism as "paganism" from Hellenism as "Greek Culture" is not new, however; it was a topic that Christians and Hellenes debated in the period under discussion. For example, the Emperor Julian's attempt to ban Christians from teaching the classics, the reaction against the ban among Christians, and the debate among early Christians as to whether or not it was appropriate for Christians to study classical (Hellenic) literature reveal several aspects of the problem in separating the dual meanings of "Hellenism."[40] The ambiguity of the term "Hellenic," and its dual meanings of "Greek" and "pagan" thus presented semantic problems for the early Christian church (as well as Hellenes) as Christian authorities attempted to define what was Christian and what was not. The ambiguity of the term "Hellenic" is sometimes appropriate for the present study, because it accurately describes the non-Christian and non-Jewish dedications to angels, all of which use the Greek term *angelos* to express divergent concepts of mediators. In addition, use of the period-specific term "Hellenic" to describe such dedications helps to communicate the challenge for the early Christian church as it attempted to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian forms of *angelos* veneration in the Greek-speaking eastern Mediterranean. However, on some occasions the polysemous nature of the word Hellenic does not serve to clarify the topic under discussion. In such circumstances I have opted to use the word "pagan," albeit with some reservations, in order to avoid more laborious circumlocutions.

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[40] See G. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 33–4, who discusses Julian's ban on Christians teaching Greek classics as Gregory of Nazianzus' reactions, recorded at *Orat.* 4.5.79–81.

In addition to Hellenic, the following study also uses the words monotheism and henotheism, two terms commonly associated with angels. As there is disagreement about the definitions of monotheism and henotheism, for the sake of consistency I have chosen to follow the definitions of monotheism and henotheism stated by Henk Versnel in his study of monotheism in Greek religion. Versnel defines monotheism as follows:

> the conviction that only one god exists (with the cultic corollary of exclusive worship), while other gods do not, or, if and so far as they do, must be *made* nonexistent, for instance by relegating them beyond the political or cultic horizon of the community and attributing to them the status of powerless, wicked or demonic forces without any (real) significance.[41]

He defines henotheism as:

> the privileged devotion to one god, who is regarded as uniquely superior, while other gods are neither depreciated nor rejected and continue receiving cultic observance whenever this is ritually required.[42]

Distinguishing between polytheism and monotheism (or henotheism) in the real world is often more difficult than ideal definitions would suggest. However, in the following study I use the term polytheism to mean: the belief in and worship of more than one god. I hope that this brief definition of words associated with *angeloi* will assist the exploration of their meanings and implications in the chapters below.

The following chapter begins the examination of angels in late antiquity with the oracular response from Claros inscribed at Oenoanda (ca. 200 CE). The response connects *angeloi* with the later Roman beliefs in supreme deities who communicated with mankind through intermediaries. Based upon the Oenoanda inscription and similar oracular statements from the late imperial period, the chapter argues that the belief in, and veneration of, *angeloi* was not only characteristic of later Roman philosophical beliefs, but had popular manifestations as well. The chapter also examines Lactantius' and the *Theosophy of Tübingen*'s reception of the oracle and their attempts to argue that the oracle's statements about angels anticipated Christian truths.

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[41] H. Versnel, "Thrice One: Three Greek Experiments in Oneness," in *One God or Many?* B. Nevling Porter, ed. (Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute Vol. 1, 2000) 85.

[42] Versnel (2000) 87.

Lactantius' statements about Hellenic *angeloi* and *daimones* are in the tradition of Origen's earlier attempts to distinguish between *angeloi* and *daimones* and Augustine's subsequent statements concerning Hellenic *angeli* and *daemones*.

Chapter Three examines inscribed texts that are characteristic of dedications to *angeloi* from pagan contexts. These inscriptions come from Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Italy. They date from the second to early-fourth centuries and illustrate both the widespread nature of *angelos* veneration and the function of the Greek language in allowing local religious traditions to communicate similar ideas about such beings in a cosmopolitan manner.

Chapter Four examines Christian, Jewish, and pagan inscriptions, textual evidence, and artistic representations that illustrate beliefs in *angeloi* that guard the living, protect tombs, and escort the dead. The chapter brings together epigraphic evidence (from Asia Minor, the Aegean Islands, and Rome) dating from the late second to early fourth centuries. The chapter places this inscriptional evidence within the contexts of theological discussions of the period, comparing Christian and Jewish beliefs in guardian *angeloi* with Neoplatonic speculation concerning tutelary *daemones*. The chapter demonstrates that the belief in angelic companions was common to several different religious traditions in late antiquity while noting divergences in belief and practice.

Chapter Five examines evidence which suggests that *angelos* invocation was believed to be more efficacious in some places than others. The chapter examines the archaeological and literary evidence for Christian and non-Christian rituals at cult sites associated with *angeloi*. The chapter focuses on Mamre and the Bethesda Pool in Judea/Palestine, Colossae in Asia Minor, and the Fountain of the Lamps at Corinth, Greece. The chapter also includes discussion of the shrine of Anna Perenna in Italy. The chapter illustrates both the ritual power of sites associated with *angeloi* and the steps that Christian authorities took in the fourth and fifth centuries to control and supervise potentially heterodox practices at such sites.

Chapter Six considers how Christian authorities in Anatolia defined acceptably Christian forms of *angelos* veneration. The chapter examines the Synod of Laodicea's (ca. 360 CE) prohibitions against extra-ecclesiastical *angeloi* invocation, Theodoret's comments on the popularity of prayer to angels in the region, and the construction of shrines and churches dedicated to the Archangel Michael. The chapter

argues that, contrary to the opinions of some scholars, the fourth and fifth century Church was not attempting to prohibit the veneration of *angeloi* in its entirety, but rather to prohibit forms of *angelos* invocation that could threaten ecclesiastical authority. Thus, the chapter argues that the evidence for the veneration of *angeloi* and the Archangel Michael in Anatolia are illustrative of the manner in which *angelos* veneration became a ritually powerful practice within normative Christianity that could support rather than undermine the spiritual potency of the nascent Church.

CHAPTER TWO

ANGELS OF THE AETHER

"Are you god? Or, is someone else?" This is the question that a theologically curious inquisitor asked the oracle of Apollo at Claros around 200 CE. One might have expected Apollo to affirm his divinity and perhaps elaborate on the awesome power of the Olympian gods.[1] However, the oracle delivered a rather surprising response, recorded in a Greek inscription in the ancient city of Oenoanda, in present-day Turkey. The oracle reported that the All-Seeing Aether was the true god, and that one should pray to him at dawn, facing to the east. In addition, the mouthpiece of Apollo replied that the Olympian deities were *angeloi* of this supreme deity. Two additional sources preserve similar versions of the oracle's statements concerning a supreme deity and its *angeloi*, the so-called *Theosophy of Tübingen* (late-fifth century) and Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* (ca. 308). Both quote part of the oracle as proof of the Hellenic anticipation of Christianity.[2] Together, these sources reveal the character of later Roman speculation about *angeloi* and a supreme deity, and the manner in which early Christian authorities used such pronouncements to demonstrate the Hellenic anticipation of Christian monotheism.

The Inscription at Oenoanda

The oracular inscription at Oenoanda is carved across a bas-relief altar located on the interior of the city's Hellenistic-era defensive walls, approximately four meters from the ground (Figure 1.1). Most scholars

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[1] As, for instance, in Apollo's statement to Diomedes at *Iliad* 5.476–478.

[2] On dating the *Theosophy of Tübingen*, see H. Erbse, *Thesophorum Graegorum Fragmenta* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995) ix–xiv. On the dating and historical context of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*, see E. DePalma Digeser, "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles: Dating the *Divine Institutes*," *JECS* 2 (1994) 38–44; Ibid., *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000) 7–13; R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 2. Scholarly consensus dates the first edition of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* to between 305 and 310. I have chosen ca. 308 as a convenient mid-point.

date the Oenoanda inscription to the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century CE.[3]

The text of the oracular inscription is as follows:

> [Α]ὐτοφυὴς, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
> οὔνομα μὴ χωρῶν, πολυώνυμος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων,
> τοῦτο θεός· μεικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.
> τοῦτο πευθομένοισι θεοῦ πέρι ὅστις ὑπάρχει,
> Αἰ[θ]έ[ρ]α πανδερκ[ῆ θε]ὸν ἔννεπεν, εἰς ὸν ὁρῶντας
> εὔχεσθῷ ἠῴους πρὸς ἀντολίην ἐσορῶ[ν]τα[ς][4]
>
> Self-generated, untaught, without-mother, un-moveable,
> not using a name, many-named, in-fire-dwelling,
> this is God. We angels [Gk: *angeloi*] are a small part of God.
> This [reply] to those who inquired about God, who he actually is:
> All-Seeing Aether is God, [the oracle] said, looking to him
> at dawn, pray, gazing towards the east.[5]

Modern study of the Oenoanda oracular inscription began when the European scholar-adventurers Philippe Le Bas and William Henry Waddington catalogued the text in the late-nineteenth century while traveling through Ottoman Anatolia in search of inscriptions. Le Bas and Waddington had difficulty in transcribing the inscription because, as they stated, it was high in the city wall.[6] About a century later, George Bean produced the first intelligible transcription of the text in

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[3] L. Robert, "Un oracle gravé a Oinoanda," *CRAI* (1971) Margherita Guarducci, "Che è Dio," *Rendiconti delle sedute dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* Serie 8 Vol. 27 (1972) 346 suggests that the text is Antonine; L. Robert, "Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda," *CRAI* (1971) 610, suggests a date at the end of the second, or beginning of the third century; R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986) 169–79 suggests around the year 200. A. S. Hall, "The Klarian Oracle at Oenoanda," *ZPE* 32 (1978) 263. (1978) 265–66, is one exception; Hall argued that the inscription should be dated no earlier than the mid-third century because after this date the section of the Hellenistic-era city wall into which the inscription is carved went out of use (thus assuming that Oenoanda's residents would not carve such and inscription into a functioning defensive edifice) and because, according to Hall, the letter-forms of the inscription date to the later-third century.

[4] Text after Hall (1978) 263.

[5] Translations mine, unless otherwise noted.

[6] Thus, Philippe Le Bas and William Henry Waddington, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines: recueilles en Asie Mineure*, vol. 1 (Meisenheim: Anton Hain, 1870; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972), no. 1234. Le Bas and Waddington's transcription is hardly intelligible, but was the first serious attempt to record the inscription. For earlier records of the inscription, see L. Robert, "Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda," *Comptes rendus Acad. Inscr.* (1971) 597–9. However, as I found upon visiting Oenoanda in spring 2003, the inscription is high, but not so high as to be unreadable.

his 1971 study of inscriptions from northern Lycia.[7] While Bean was unable to understand the nature of the inscription, his publication of the text enabled Louis Robert, who had a better acquaintance with similar texts, to publish a study that helped to explain the origin of the oracular response recorded at Oenoanda.[8]

Robert demonstrated that three lines of the Oenoanda inscription appear almost verbatim in Lactantius's *Divine Institutes* and the *Theosophy of Tübingen*.[9] These texts provided details about the origin of the oracles they record, and Robert argued on the basis of those details that the text at Oenoanda had originated at the Oracle of Apollo at Claros. More specifically, the first three lines of the Oenoanda inscription appear as the last three lines of a sixteen-line oracle recorded in the *Theosophy of Tübingen*, an epitome of a late-fifth century collection of oracles that was the eighth book of a larger work.[10] This text states that a certain Theophilus asked the oracle whether Apollo was god, or someone else.[11] Lactantius's *Divine Institutes* (ca. 308)quotes three lines of an oracle that are almost exactly the first three of the Oenoanda inscription. Lactantius states that the three lines are from the beginning of a twenty-one line oracle from Colophon (the city that owned the oracle of Apollo at Claros).[12] Thus, the similarity of the

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[7] George Ewart Bean, *Journeys in Northern Lycia* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1971) 20–2, no. 37.

[8] Bean (1971) 21–2, judged the text to be without parallel, and suggested that the text could be Orphic, since some of the adjectives used to describe the god Aether can be found in the Orphic fragments.

[9] L. Robert (1971) 597–609. Robert's demonstration contradicted Bean, who noted that while the language of the inscription sounded vaguely oracular, "no oracle of Apollo (for example) would presumably have identified the god with Aether," Bean (1971) 21. However, for ancient testimony on the Clarian Oracle and Orphism, see Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.18.12–22, where "Praetextatus" compares Orpheus' equation of Liber, Phanes, Apollo, Zeus, and several other deities with the Clarian Oracle's equation of Iao, Hades, Zeus, and Helios, citing Cornelius Labeo's *On the Oracle of Apollo at Claros*. See below, p. 46.

[10] Robert (1971) 604–6. *Theosophy of Tübingen* §13, edited in H. Erbse, *Fragmente griechischer Theosophien herausgegeben und quellenkritisch untersucht, Hamburger Arbeiten zur Altertumswissenschaft IV* (1941) 169; and subsequently in H. Erbse, *Theosophorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Stutgard: Teubner, 1995) §13, pp. 7–9. On dating the *Theosophy*, see note 2, above.

[11] Ὅτι Θεοφίλου τινὸς /τοὔνομα τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἐρωτήσαντος· "σὺ εἶ θεὸς ἢ /ἄλλος;" Text after Erbse (1995) §13, p. 7.

[12] *Div. Inst*. 1.5.7. The oracles in the Theosophy and in Lactantius had been compared prior to Bean's text by A. D. Nock, who argued that they both came from separate redactions of oracles found in Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* and by H. Lewy who suggested that they came from the work of Julian the Theurgist: Hans

Oenoanda inscription to those quoted in Lactantius and the *Theosophy* provide strong evidence that the inscription at Oenoanda came from Claros.

The terms the inscription uses to describe the supreme god have parallels in Orphic literature. For example, the Orphic Hymn to Phusis uses the terms "Self-Fathered" and "Un-Fathered" (αὐτοπάτωρ, ἀπάτωρ) to describe Phusis (Nature), which are comparable to "Self-Generated" and "Un-mothered" (αὐτοφυὴς, ἀπάτωρ) in the first line of inscription.[13] Similarly, Nonnus (late fourth century) in his epic tale of Dionysus describes Phusis as fatherless (ἀπάτωρ), unusually-born (ἀλόχευτος), motherless (ἀμήτωρ), a term in the inscription, and self-generating (αὐτογένεθλος), comparable to Oenoanda's self-generated (αὐτοφυὴς).[14] The Orphic and Dionysian character of such language led Bean to suggest that the response might be Orphic; he even stated that, "no oracle of Apollo (for example) would presumably have identified the god with Aether."[15] Since Robert's study, it seems certain that Apollo did just that. However, Bean's suggestion remains a valid reminder that the theological language employed in the inscription appears in other contexts. Also along Orphic lines, for instance, the cosmogony of the Dervini Papyrus places a personified Aether among the first generation of gods.[16] Such comparanda indicate that the oracle's theology was part of a broader trend in later Roman paganism that was not limited to Claros.

The deity All-Seeing Aether, while unusual, would fit in well with later Roman philosophical ideas about the divine nature of the aether,

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Lewy, *The Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (Paris: Institut francais d'archéologie orientale, 1956) 18–19; A. D. Nock, "Oracles Théologiques," *Revue des études anciennes* 30 (1928) 280–281, reprint A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, Vol. 1, no. 7, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 160–161.

[13] Orphic Hymn 10.9, in W. Quandt, *Orphei hymni*, 3rd edn. Berlin: Weidmann, 1962 (repr. 1973): 1–57. For discussion of additional parallels, see Robert (1971) 603–4.

[14] *Dionysiaca*—41.51–53. ἐνθάδε φῶτες ἔναιον ὁμήλικες Ἠριγενείης, οὓς Φύσις αὐτογένεθλος ἀνυμφεύτῳ τινὶ θεσμῷ ἤροσε νόσφι γάμων, ἀπάτωρ, ἀλόχευτος, ἀμήτωρ. Text: R. Keydell, *Nonni Panopolitani Dionysiaca*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1959).

[15] Bean (1971) 21.

[16] Dervini Papyrus, *L6* = col 13.4; see G. Betegh, *The Dervini Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 153–6, Greek text and translation pp. 28–9. Critical edition and commentary: T. Kouremenos, G. Parassoglou, and K. Tsantsanoglou, *The Dervini Papyrus* (Florence: Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere, 2006) 87.

of the sun, and of fire. For instance, Artemidorus includes such a deity among the Olympians, stating:[17]

> We divide the gods into the Olympians, whom we also call the aetherial gods, the terrestrial gods, the sea and river gods, the chthonic gods <and those in their circle>. The aetherial gods are called, reasonably enough, Zeus, Hera, Heavenly Aphrodite, Artemis, Apollo, Aetherial Fire, and Athena.[18]

In Artemidorus's second-century understanding of the cosmos, Aetherial Fire kept company with the Olympians.[19] The Clarian oracle promoted a variation on such a cosmology. In the late-second or early-third century, the oracle elevated a personified Aether, who dwells in fire, to a status higher than the Olympians. According to the inscription, this supreme deity relied on the Olympian gods, as *angeloi*, to explain to men the nature of the supreme god and the correct way to pray to the deity.

The oracle's statement that the *angeloi* are a "small part of god" implies that the they share a part of the All-Seeing Aether's divinity. The theological system thus implied by the oracle is one in which the angels of the supreme God manifest his divinity in its various aspects.[20]

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[17] Connection noted in Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987) 170, in reference to Artemidorus, 2.34. Cf. Cic., *de nat. deorum* 1.39, which states that Chrysippus deifies fire (*ignis*), a substance that Cicero had termed aether (*aethera*). See A. S. Pease, *Cicero: de natura deorum* Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955) 270, s.v. *ignem*, who notes that "the Stoics, from Zeno on, laid great emphasis upon fire in its various forms;" A. D. Dyck *Cicero de natura deorum* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) 113, s.v. *ignem praeterea…aethera*. See also Athenagoras, *Leg.* 2.5, who quotes Euripides, "Do you see aloft the boundless ether, encircling the earth in its damp folds? This esteem Zeus. This Consider God." Trans. adapted from W. R. Schoedel, *Athenagoras: Legatio and de Resurrectione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 11. Idem for Greek text.

[18] Atemidorus, 2.34. Translation Robert J. White, *The Interpretation of Dreams—Oneirocritica by Artemidorus* (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1975) 112–3. φαμὲν δὲ τῶν θεῶν τοὺς μὲν Ὀλυμπίους εἶναι, οὓς καὶ αἰθερίους καλοῦμεν, τοὺς δὲ οὐρανίους, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιγείους, τοὺς δὲ θαλασσίους καὶ ποταμίους, τοὺς δὲ χθονίους, <τοὺς δὲ πέριξ τούτων>. αἰθέριοι μὲν οὖν λέγοιντο ἂν εἰκότως Ζεὺς <καὶ> Ἥρα καὶ Ἀφροδίτη ἡ Οὐρανία καὶ Ἄρτεμις καὶ Ἀπόλλων καὶ Πῦρ τὸ αἰθέριον καὶ Ἀθηνᾶ· Text from Roger A. Pack, *Artemidori Daldiani: oneirocriticon libri V* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963) 156–7.

[19] Artemidorus composed his work sometime between the reigns of Hadrian and Commodus. See White (1975) 1–2.

[20] C. Gallavotti, "Un' epigrafe teosofica ad Enoanda nel quadro della teurgia caldaica," *Philologus* 121 (1977) 101, argues that the *angeloi* of the Oenoanda inscription are human messengers rather than the Olympian gods. Such an interpretation seems impossible given the theological language of the response. In addition, the earliest

Thus, the Olympian gods, as *angeloi*, are in reality different aspects of a single supreme divinity who, because of his unmovable nature, cannot transcend the distance between heaven and earth.[21] Such a divine cosmology is comparable to Platonic cosmology as expressed in the *Timaeus*, which posited a supreme being served by lesser divinities who communicate between the divine and the mundane.[22] In the Roman period, Platonic theology continued to develop a more complex divine hierarchy, particularly in its Middle and Neo-Platonic forms.[23] This divine hierarchy stressed the unreachable quality of a supreme deity and the function of intermediaries in bridging the gap between the supreme God and men. The similarity of the Clarian/Oenoandan and Platonic theological systems demonstrates that the pagan belief in a supreme god served by intermediaries was not particular to philosophers and intellectual elites, but had a more popular appeal as well.[24]

The Placement of the Oenoanda Inscription

Perhaps more striking than the inscription's theology is its cultic context. As discussed above, there is evidence for later Roman henothe-

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commentator on the oracle, Lactantius, understood *angeloi* to refer to the old pagan gods, see below. Cf. Jeanne Robert and Louis Robert, *BE* (1978), p. 477 no. 464, who argue contra Gallavotti that the *angeloi* are gods, not human messengers.

[21] On the importance of mediators for the Hellenic understanding of a single, supreme divinity, see Martin Nilsson, "The High God and the Mediator," *HThR* 56 (1963) 106–15. While Nilsson's work makes many points that are relevant to understanding monotheistic ideas and intermediation in Greek and Roman religion, his article reveals a significant Christian bias and tends to follow the same method as Lactantius and other Christian apologists by viewing Christianity as a the final culmination of a trend in Hellenic religion towards monotheism.

[22] E.g. *Timaeus* 40–1.

[23] For Middle Platonic daemonology, see John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) 24–33, on Xenocrates; 168–73, on Philo; 214–23, on Plutarch; and 315–25, on Apuleius. For Neoplatonic daemonology, see R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995) 123–34. on Porphyrian and Iamblichean metaphysics; 146–58, on the post-Iamblichean system of intermediaries linking the divine and material worlds. Cf. Iamblichus, *De Myst*., 1.2.15–17; 2.2.65; 2.3.70.

[24] Similarly, Peter Brown, *Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 12–22, has argued that, in the case of early Christian practice, the division between high and low religion is largely artificial. See also, *Nag Hammadi Codices* (I, 5), The Tripartite Tractate 53, which expresses a similar Valentinian theology. English translation by Harold W. Attridge and Dieter Mueller in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, James M. Robinson, ed. (San Francisco: Harper San Fransicso, 1988) 58–103.

istic theology and *angelos* speculation among pagan philosophers and similar intellectual elites. The Oenoanda inscription indicates that the belief in a supreme god and *angeloi* found a place in popular religious practice.[25] The Oenoanda inscription is a unique example of a statement of pagan henotheist theology and angelology erected at a cult site, and a brief examination of its physical setting will help to illustrate the significance of the inscription's context.

The inscription at Oenoenda was carved into the interior face of a defensive wall, next to the entrance to one of the wall's towers (See photographs in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 and the map in Figure 2.4). The inscription is carved across a bas-relief altar, which was sculpted onto one of the wall's original stones.[26] The inscription and relief altar are approximately four meters from the ground. A. S. Hall's first-hand analysis of the location of the inscription suggested that the inscription was sited to catch the first rays of the rising sun.[27] Such a setting would appear to be a deliberate response to the oracle's instructions to "pray at dawn, facing towards the east." Therefore, Hall suggested that certain residents of Oenoanda inscribed the words of the oracle in a location that would demonstrate their piety towards the All-Seeing Aether.[28]

There is a second inscription located below and to the right of the oracular inscription. It is a dedication to Theos Hypsistos from Chromatis (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.3), which is also carved across a relief altar. The second inscription records the gift of a lamp to the Most High God (*Theos Hypsistos*) from a certain Chromatis. The inscription states:

> Χρωμα | τὶς Θεῷ | ὑψίστῳ | τὸν λύχ | νον | εὐχ[ή]ν[29]
>
> From Chromatis to Theos Hypsistos, this lamp as a prayer offering.

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[25] J. A. North, "Pagans, Polytheists, and the Pendulum," in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Explanation*, W. V. Harris, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2005) 140, similarly notes the significance of the inscriptions cultic context.

[26] That the inscription was carved into an existing stone was first observed by Hall (1978) 264, correcting Bean (1971) 20, who stated that the inscription and altar were carved on a new stone.

[27] Hall (1970) 264, Tafel XIII-a. Hall also emending Robert's suggestion that the inscription served as a protective talisman for the city, which was based on Bean's statement that the inscription was beside the "gate" of the city. In fact, the inscription is located on the interior of the wall, and the "gate" gives entrance to a defensive tower. Thus, the inscription would make an unlikely talisman.

[28] Those in need of comic relief may wish to examine Hall's demonstration of piety at Hall (1978) Tafel XIII-a, where Hall is pictured offering a prayer towards the east.

[29] Hall (1978) 265.

A dedication to Theos Hypsistos seems appropriate near an inscription that describes the nature of a supreme deity, albeit one termed the All-Seeing Aether. In addition, Theos Hypsistos is frequently paired with *angeloi* and angelic divinities on dedications from southwestern Asia Minor (as recent studies have noted and I discuss further in the next chapter).[30] Thus, Chromatis' dedication to Theos Hypsistos appears to be a suitable companion inscription for the Clarian oracle's response. Because of the likely association of Chromatis' dedication and the oracular inscription, Hall and, subsequently, Stephen Mitchell, have suggested that devotees used the site next to the wall at Oenoanda to offer prayers and lamps to a supreme deity.[31] It seems fairly certain that the inscriptions mark a cult site, but the fact that the wall is located atop a steep ridge would make large gathering for worship precarious (see Figure 1.4). Thus, in my view, the site could accommodate only a small number of people at any time. Even though the number of worshippers that gathered at Oenoanda may have been small, the placement and context of the inscriptions are significant because they provide evidence of popular cult activity directed towards a supreme deity and attendant *angeloi*.

Lactantius' Quotation of the Oracle

Other sources provide further details about the origin and context of the Oracle at Oenoanda. The earliest of these is Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* (ca. 308), which quotes an oracle stated to be from the oracle of Apollo at Colophon (i.e. Claros). The text of his oracle is nearly the same as the first three lines of the oracle inscribed at Oenoanda. Lactantius' quotation and commentary reveals how a Christian could receive and co-opt non-Christian theology. Lactantius states:

> Indeed, Apollo, whom they consider to be divine and most prophetic, more so than the others, when he was responding at Colophon (he had moved from Delphi, I believe, drawn by the pleasantness of Asia) to a

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[30] Most recently, Stephen Mitchell, "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity,* P. Athanassiadi and Michael Frede, eds. (1999) 80–92.

[31] Hall (1978) 266–7; Stephen Mitchell (1999) 80–92. Mitchell pushes the argument further, arguing that the site of the Oenoanda inscription was a sanctuary for Theos Hypsistos. Such a specific identification is impossible to prove based on the present state of evidence. See further in Chapter 3, *passim*.

certain man who asked, "Who or what is God over all?" He responded in twenty-one verses, of which the beginning is:

> [Greek] *Self-Generated, untaught, without-mother, unmovable*
> *Not using a name in word, dwelling in fire.*
> *This is God, and we angels are a small part of God.*

Is there anyone who could suspect that that this was said about Jove, who has both a name and a mother? What about the fact that Thrice-Greatest Mercury, about whom I made mention above, not only calls God "without-mother," but also "Without father," because he does not have an origin in another place? Indeed, he who himself brought the universe into existence is unable to be brought into existence by something else. I have instructed sufficiently, as I see it, through arguments, and I have confirmed through witnesses, because it is clear enough in and of itself that there is one king of the world, one father, one Lord.[32]

The oracle that Lactantius quotes contains only the first three lines of the six inscribed at Oenoanda. Thus, his text does not include the question as recorded at Oenoanda (line 4), the statement that the "All-Seeing Aether" is god, or the instructions for how to pray to the All-Seeing Aether (Oenoanda lines 5–6). Lactantius provides his reader with a slightly different version of the question. According to the Oenoanda inscription, the questioner asked (in Greek) "Are you God, or is someone else?" Lactantius introduces the oracle by stating that the question was (in Latin) "Who or what is God over all?" Lactantius' version of the question is not a faithful translation of the Greek text that appears at Oenoanda. What can account for the difference? As I argue below, it is likely that the Clarian oracle issued similar theological statements on different occasions. So, it is possible that Lactantius' quotes from a different oracle. It is also possible that

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[32] Lactantius, *Inst. Div* 1.7.1–3. Apollo enim, quem praeter ceteros divinum maximeque fatidicum existimant, Colophone respondens, quo Delphis, credo, migraverat, amoenitate Asiae ductus; quaerenti cuidam, quis aut quid esset omnino Deus, respondit viginti et uno versibus, quorum hoc principium est:

Αὐτοφυὴς, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
Οὔνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωρούμενός, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων·
Τοῦτο θεὸς, μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἥμεῖς,

Num quis potest suspicari de Jove esse dictum, qui et matrem habuit, et nomen? Quid quod, Mercurius ille Termaximus, cuius supra feci mentionem, non modo ἀμήτορα, ut Apollo, sed ἀπάτορα quoque appellat Deum, quod origo illi non sit aliunde? Nec enim potest ab ullo esse generatus qui ipse universa generavit. Satis, ut opinor, et argumentis docui et testibus confirmavi, quod per se satis clarum est unum esse regem mundi, unum patrem, unum dominum. Text after P. Monat, *Lactance: Institutions divines*, Livre 1 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1986) 84–6.

he consulted a compilation of oracles that contained a different version of the question (see below). However, it is worth observing that Lactantius' question explicitly anticipates a monotheistic response, which is better suited to his commentary on the oracle. The question recorded at Oenoanda does not demand to know who is the "God of all," but simply whether the oracular deity is god, or if someone else is. The difference is subtle, but significant. Because of the oracle's response, the reader may infer that Oenoanda's questioner was seeking to know the identity of a henotheistic deity, but the question could allow other responses. However, Lactantius' version of the question makes it clear that the questioner wished to know the identity of a supreme deity, who was a god, "over all." Stating the question in such a manner allows Lactantius to interpret the response as a pagan anticipation of Christian truth. Based on Lactantius' testimony, Apollo's oracle did not proclaim the All-Seeing Aether to be god. Rather, the oracle correctly identified the attributes of the God of All, which is a phrase descriptive of the Christian God.

As previous commentators have noted, Lactantius' oracle does not include the adjective "many-named" for the supreme deity, as at Oenoanda.[33] This could be because Lactantius' source contained a slightly different text. However, as previous scholars have noted, "many-named" would seem an unlikely word for Lactantius' to use to describe the Christian God. Because Lactantius quotes the oracle to prove the pagan anticipation of Christianity, it is possible that Lactantius altered the text, omitting a term that was incompatible with Christian theology. Likewise, if Lactantius' source contained any statement that the All-Seeing Aether was God or instructions for how to worship such a transcendent deity, he could have omitted the text because it would appear to undermine his efforts to prove that pagan oracles anticipated Christian truths and eventual triumph.

Even with a more Christian-friendly version of the oracle, Lactantius still faced the challenge of the apparently contradictory tactic of appealing to the authority of the oracle in order to demonstrate the truth of Christian theology, while simultaneously attempting to discredit the religion associated with the oracle. One way that Lactantius accomplishes this task is by attacking the way that the oracle uses the word *angeloi* and attempting to restrict the meaning of this term so

[33] L. Robert (1971) 608–9; see also J. A. North (2005) 140.

that it applies only the messengers of the Christian God. Lactantius ridicules Apollo[34] and states that while the theological system and the names are correct, Apollo has intentionally misapplied the term *angelos* to the Olympian gods, who are not angels at all, but rather *daemones*, stating:

> Indeed, the third verse reveals that God's servants ought not be called gods, but angels.[35] About himself, this same Apollo has lied. He has added himself to the angels, although he is of the number of the daemons. Furthermore, in other responses, he confessed that he is a daemon. For when he was asked in what manner he wished to be prayed to, he responded:
>
> [Greek] *Most-clever, all-learned, most versatile daemon, give ear.*[36]

Thus, Lactantius presents the somewhat paradoxical argument that although the spirit behind the oracle is evil and deceptive, the oracle's description of a supreme deity surrounded by angels is in accordance with Christian theology. Essentially, Lactantius argues that while there is some truth in the Hellenic theology that the oracle espoused, Hellenic religion is fundamentally in error and Christianity supersedes it.

For Lactantius, *daemones* were fallen, evil angels who did the bidding of Satan. It is certain, however, that the other oracle Lactantius refers to in the text above, wherein Apollo called himself a *daemon*, was not Apollo's inadvertent admission of his evil nature. The oracle appears to have used the term *daemon* as neutral term for "divinity," because the word did not have an inherently negative connotation among

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[34] For example, by saying that Apollo left for Delphi, drawn by the pleasantness of Asia, *Inst. Div* 1.7.1, text and translation above.

[35] In this passage, Lactantius uses the Latinized form of the Greek *angelos* to describe intermediaries of the Christian God. However, in 1.7.4, he uses the term *nuntius*, a Latin translation of Greek *angelos*—messenger—rather than the celestially specific Latin *angelus*.

[36] Lactantius (*Inst. Div*. 1.7.9) Tertium enim versus ostendit ministros Dei non deos, verum angelos appellari oportere. De se quidem ille mentitus est, qui cum sit e numero daemonum, angelis se Dei adgregavit. Denique in aliis responsis daemonem se esse confessus est: nam cum interrogaretur quomodo sibi supplicari vellet, is respondit:

Πάνσοφε, παντοδίδακτε, πολύστροφε, πάνσοφε, κέκλυθι δαῖμον.

Text after P. Monat, *Lactance: Institutions Divines, Livre 1*. SC 326 (Paris: Cerf, 1986) 89. Translation from *Lactantius: Divine Institutes*, A. Bowen and P. Garnsey, trans. Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 40 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003) 73–4.

Lactantius, *Inst. Div*. 1. 7.9–10, refers to two other oracles, which he cites in support of Apollo's demonic identity. The sources of the three oracles have not been found, see Monat (1986) 89 n. 2. The oracles could presumably be from Didyma or Delphi, and are not necessarily from Claros.

non-Christian writers. Later Roman philosophers, for example, used the terms *angelus* and *daemon* interchangeably, with *daemon* describing a particular sort of divine intermediary, and *angelus* describing the function of these beings.[37] In early Greek literature, the term *daemon* could even be used interchangeably with *theos* (god).[38] In the classical period, Plato describes the nature of the *daemon* in the *Symposium*, where the term *daemon* is not negative, but only a word that described a spiritual being capable of spanning the distance between heaven and earth.[39] Lactantius, however, articulating Christian doctrine in terms that several religious traditions shared, argues that *angelus* describes the messengers of the Christian God, while *daemon*, far from being a neutral term, describes the agents of Satan.[40] He explains the origin of *daemones* through reference to the story of the fall of the angels found in Genesis.[41] Lactantius also states that *angeloi* are not the same as gods, and neither should people worship them.[42] However, Lactantius' discussion of God and his angels attempts to appeal to a polytheist audience. Thus, while Lactantius insists that there is only one God, he argues that God is not alone in heaven. Lactantius states that the angels of God are innumerable and that polytheists err by imagining too few divine beings.[43] Thus, Lactantius suggests that the pagan who prefers a divine world full of supernatural beings would find the Christian cosmos a comfortable place. Through such interpretation, and perhaps manipulation of the oracular text, Lactantius argues for a Hellenic anticipation of Christian beliefs about God and his *angeloi*.

The Theosophy of Tübingen

The second Christian source for the oracle's response is the late-fifth century *Theosophy of Tübingen*.[44] The *Theosophy*'s introduction, appended after the compilation was separated from a larger work,

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[37] Porphyry, as summarized by Augustine at *Civ. Dei* 10.26. Also Cornelius Labeo, as Augustine states at *Civ. Dei* 9.19. See discussion of angels and demons in Origen and Augustine in Chapter 1.

[38] For example at *Od.* 3.166.

[39] *Symp.* 202d–204a.

[40] Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* 2.14.

[41] Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* 2.14.

[42] Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* 1.7.5.

[43] Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* 1.7.6–7.

[44] On dating the *Theosophy*, see above, note 2.

states that the intention of the original editor, like Lactantius, was to demonstrate how Hellenic philosophers and oracles anticipated Christian theology.[45] The Clarian Oracle's response as recorded in the *Theosophy* is sixteen lines long, considerably longer than Lactantius' text and the Oenoanda inscription. The oracular text is followed by a prose paraphrase in less oracular language. The additional oracular material and the paraphrase provide insight into later Roman ideas about a supreme deity and how *angeloi* were thought to mediate the distance between that deity and the material world. The text states:

> Because a certain Theophilus asked Apollo, "Are you God, or is someone else?" Apollo responded thus:
>
> > It is he, over the starry vault of heaven, chosen by fate from above,/ a boundless fiery heat, set in motion, the limitless Aion,/ and among the blessed ones he is one against whom nothing can be done, unless/ the Great Father wills that he be perceived./ In that place, neither does the aether carry the brightly shining stars,/ neither does the clearly shining moon float,/ god does not go forth along a path, and neither do I myself,/ holding fast with golden rays, spread over, whirling in the aether./ But, the fiery god goes forth, an enormous channel,/ he moves twisting and turning, whirring in motion; perceiving that/ aethereal fire one would not divide one's soul,/ for he does not divide, but in constant practice,/ an age is mingled with eternity in accordance with this god,/ self-nurtured, untaught, motherless, unshaken,/ neither making use of a name in speech, dwelling in fire,/ this is god, and we angels [*angeloi*] are a small part of god.[46]

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[45] Section 1: "The one who has compiled this book, the very one inscribed "Theosophy," stated directly in his proemium, that while he wrote the first seven books on correct belief, he then composed the eighth and following books, which presented the oracles of the Hellenic gods and the theological sayings of the Hellenes and wise Egyptians, as well as the oracles of certain sibyls, with an eye towards the [oracles] in agreement with holy scripture, both the principal and most outstanding of all of them and those that revealed the holy triad in one divinity." Greek text in Erbse (1995) 1.

[46] *Theosophy* 13: Ὅτι Θεοφίλου τινὸς /τοὔνομα τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἐρωτήσαντος· "σὺ εἶ θεὸς ἢ /ἄλλος;", ἔχρησεν οὕτως·/"Ἐσθ', ὑπὲρ οὐρανίου κύτεος καθύπερθε λεγογχώς, /φλογμὸς ἀπειρέσιος, κινούμενος, ἄπλετος ΑΙΩΝ· /ἔστι δ' ἐνὶ μακάρεσσιν ἀμήχανος, εἰ μὴ ἑαυτὸν /βουλὰς βουλεύσῃσι πατὴρ μέγας, ὡς ἐσιδέσθαι. /ἔνθα μὲν οὔτ' αἰθὴρ φέρει ἀστέρας ἀγλαοφεγγεῖς /οὔτε σεληναίη λιγυφεγγέτις αἰωρεῖται, /οὐ θεὸς ἀντιάει κατ' ἀταρπιτόν, οὐδ' ἐγὼ αὐτὸς /ἀκτῖσιν συνέχων ἐπικίδναμαι αἰθεροδινής. /ἀλλὰ πέλει πυρσοῖο θεὸς περιμήκετος αὐλών, /ἔρπων εἰλίγδην, ῥοιζούμενος, οὔ κεν ἐκείνου /ἁψάμενος πυρὸς αἰθερίου δαίσειέ τις ἦτορ· /οὐ γὰρ ἔχει δαίην, ἀζηχεῖ δ' ἐν μελεδηθμῷ /αἰὼν αἰώνεσσ' ἐπιμίγνυται ἐκ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ. /αὐτοφυής, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος, /οὔνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωρούμενος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων, /τοῦτο θεός· μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς. Text after Erbse (1995).

The last three lines of the *Theosophy*'s oracle are identical to Lactantius' three-line quotation, including the omission of the term πολυώνυμος—many named—found in the Oenoanda inscription. Also like Lactantius, the *Theosophy* does not contain the last three lines of the Oenoanda inscription, which give instructions for prayer and call the supreme god the "All-Seeing Aether." The *Theosophy's* oracle appears to provide two other terms for the supreme god, "Aion" and "Great Father." Although the text does not call the god the All-Seeing Aether, the dwelling-place and substance of the god are called aethereal. For example, the text describes god as "aethereal fire," and Apollo states that he does not whirl in the aether as the supreme god does.[47] The Greek word *aether* can mean simply "air," but in ancient cosmologies, the term aether typically refers the "uppermost atmosphere."[48] It seems that we should understand the oracle's use of the term along the lines of the latter meaning. Thus, in the *Theosophy*, the god inhabits this aetherial space, but because the god is also limitless, he seems in some sense to *be* the aetherial space as well. I suggest that this is where the Oenoanda inscription's naming of god, the "All-Seeing Aether" has its origin. It seems plausible that the the Oenoanda inscription's name for god refers to a Clarian tradition about the aetherial nature of the supreme god. It is not a great leap from describing god as boundlessly inhabiting an aethereal space to calling god the "All-Seeing Aether," especially when the oracle indicates that any name is incapable of defining god. Thus, any name can only reflect some aspect of god's nature.

The titles "Aion" and "Great Father," which appear in the *Theosophy*'s text, do not appear at Oenoanda, or in Lactantius. As I argue below, it seems quite likely that we are looking at two, and possibly three, different oracles, or different versions of the same oracle. Thus, the inclusion (and exclusion) of titles may be attributable to sources or transmission. It appears that the title "Great Father" indicates the god's role in presiding over the cosmos. The title Aion is somewhat different, as the god "Aion" appears in numerous literary sources, is

[47] See also Parke (1985) 167, who offers a similar observation, noting that the *Theosophy* describes fire dwelling in the aether, untouched and unmoved by the universe below, but that god is not explicitly said to be "Aether." The differences in the two texts, Parke speculates that those who inscribed the block at Oenoanda may not have been the direct recipients of the oracle, but could have copied it at a later point from a collection of oracles, such as those compiled by Porphyry and Cornelius Labeo.

[48] See Aristarchus on *Il.* 14.288; *LSJ*, s.v. αἰθήρ.

depicted in a number of later Roman mosaics, and was the recipient of dedications in the Roman period. Thus, the Clarian oracle's identification of its supreme god as Aion may reveal a connection between the Clarian Oracle's theology and other ideas about supreme gods in late antiquity. Bearing in mind that the oracle states that god uses no name (and is "many-named" at Oenoanda), a brief examination of the god Aion in the imperial period may offer some insight into how the supreme god was conceptualized by the Clarian Oracle.

Although the concept of Aion (an age, eternity) as an abstract god appears to date from the Hellenistic period, the earliest dedication to Aion as a deity dates to the Augustan age and comes from Eleusis.[49] The abstract deity Aion appears to have been further popularized under Antoninus Pius, as part of the emperor's program of claiming a new era, (Greek: *aion*) to have begun.[50] Antoninus, perhaps as Augustus before him, equated the Greek *aion* with the Latin *saeculum*, and coins minted by Antoninus depict Aion as a phoenix, as well as a youth standing within the wheel of the zodiac, suggesting rebirth and renewal.[51] The latter depiction of Aion also appears on a number of mosaics from the late second century through at least the fourth century, from regions as far apart as southern Gaul, North Africa, and Syria. In such mosaic depictions, the youthful Aion is often accompanied by the seasons.[52] In all of these depictions Aion appears to be the personification of the passing of time, of renewal, and of eternity. Such qualities are not unlike the descriptions of god in the *Theosophy*, which describes god as whirring for eternity, in constant motion,

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[49] Plato provides the classical philosophical definition of Aion in the *Timaeus* (37 D). For Aion as a cult god, see D. Levi, "Aion," *Hesperia* 13 (1944): 274–314; For literary references to Aion in the imperial period, see G. Zuntz, *ΑΙΩΝ: in der Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenscheften, 1992). On Aion at Eleusis, see G. Zuntz, *ΑΙΩΝ: Gott des Römerreichs* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989), who argues that the transition of Aion from concept to deity was part of Augustus' program surrounding the Saecular Games. For critique, see J. H. W. B. Liebeschuetz, "Review," *CR* 42 (1992) 212–3.

[50] Levi (1944): 294–6; 306–7.

[51] Levi (1944): 294–6. The earliest securely datable depiction of Aion is on the monument of C. Julius Zoilos, a powerful local from Aphrodisias, whose career dates to the late Republic. The monument portrays Aion as an old man, perhaps a prophet, and perhaps in the style an Augustan program equating Aion with the Latin *saeculum aureum*. See R. R. R. Smith, *The Monument of C. Julius Zoilos* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993) 45–8. See also Zuntz (1992) and Liebeschuetz (1992).

[52] D. Parrish, "The Mosaic of Aion and the Seasons from Haïdra (Tunisia): "An Interpretation of Its Meaning and Importance," *Antiquité Tardive* 3 (1995): 167–91.

combining an age with eternity. Even the *Theosophy*'s description of god as a channel above the heavens could be taken as reference to the circle of the zodiac, typically depicted around the god Aion. This is not to say that the Clarian Oracle's supreme god should be positively identified as the Aion who appears on late Roman art and literature. Rather, the Clarian Oracle's description of the supreme god, and the use of the term Aion to describe him, are part of a broader trend in later Roman religion in which an abstract deity, represented as eternity, is understood to preside over the cosmos.[53] This deity is distinct from the traditional Olympian gods and has a completely non-material existence. As such, the god can have no direct interaction with the material world. This quality necessitates the use of intermediaries, such as Apollo, to reveal the existence of such a god to humans. In such a role, the Olympian deities are called *angeloi*, i.e. messengers. As the oracle states, such *angeloi* are a small part of god, which indicates that the Olympians share in some of the divine qualities of the supreme god while still being able to communicate with the material world of humans.

Difficulties in understanding the *Theosophy*'s oracular language appear to have arisen in late antiquity. A paraphrase that follows the oracle in the *Theosophy* attempts to explain the text in somewhat simpler language and it is still helpful for understanding the oracle. For example, as an explanation of the somewhat abstruse statements about the imperceptibility of god, the text summarizes as by stating that god is,

> neither perceived by the heavenly powers, unless the Father prepares himself to be seen, and the path of the mental fire is imperceptible by the aether, the stars, the moon, and the afore-mentioned gods, and myself, he says, the same Helios.[54]

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[53] Aion was identified with a number of powerful deities in the late empire, such as the Egyptian gods Ra and Osiris, and, also in Egypt, the offspring of the Virgin Kore. For syncretism with Aion, see Nock (1934) 79–98/ repr. (1972) I: 377–94, who also discusses the difficulty of distinguishing between Aion the cult god and *aion* as a personification of "eternity," as well as the difficulty of speaking of a single god called Aion; see also Levi (1944) 274–97, who also associates Aion with the Mithraic Zurvan, an identification rejected by R. Beck, *ANRW* 2.17.4: 2086–2089. For Kore and Aion the key source is Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51.22. For analysis of this passage, see Nock (1934) 90–8/ repr. (1972) I: 388–94; G. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) 22–8.

[54] *Theosophy* 14.4–8.

The author of the paraphrase goes on to explain the oracle's somewhat obscure statements about the inability of one to divide one's soul in the realm of the supreme god,

> The one who perceived this sort of fire would no longer divide his own soul among the perceptible things. For this fire cannot be divided, but is always and eternally it combines with the eternal.[55]

This is a Neoplatonic reading of the oracle, and as discussed above, other portions of the oracle suggest a Platonic cosmology.[56] By adopting a prose format and abandoning the oracular vocabulary, the editor has rendered the oracle's statement understandable to those acquainted with the rudiments of Neoplatonic thought.

The *Theosophy*'s explanation of the angelic nature of Apollo and the Olympians reveals a Christian reading of the text. Oenoanda, Lactantius, and the *Theosophy* all contain the oracle's statement that *angeloi* are a "small part of god." This statement indicates a sharing of the uniquely divine nature of the supreme god, an understanding of God and his angels that can be found in some early Christian apologists.[57] The acceptability of such an angelology in an earlier generation may be why Lactantius does not comment upon that aspect of the oracle. However, such an understanding of the nature of angels is in opposition to Nicene orthodoxy's view that angels are created beings who do not share in God's divine nature. The *Theosophy*'s commentary, composed after the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381), attempts to explain the oracle's statement so that it is reconciled with post-Nicene theology. Only fourteen lines below the *Theosophy*'s quotation of the oracle, its paraphrase explains the statement on angels in this way, "Therefore he says this, that god is truly fire, and we [Olympian gods] are the smallest angelic power."[58] This is not quite what the oracle says. In this explanation, the *angeloi* do not have a share in God's divinity; moreover, in this explanation angelic power is implicitly different than divine power. Such an explanation makes the

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[55] *Theosophy* 14.10–13.

[56] See above, note 23.

[57] J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 133–6, discusses the understanding of angels in the atne-Nicene fathers.

[58] τοῦτο οὖν, φησί, τὸ πῦρ ἀληθῶς θεός, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐλαχίστη δύναμις ἀγγελικὴ ὑπάρχομεν (14.14–15), Text after Erbse (1995).

oracle's statement better reflect Nicene orthodoxy, in which *angeloi* are created beings rather than a "small part of god."[59]

Clarian Oracles

The comparison of oracular texts reveals that the oracle of Apollo at Claros is the most likely source for all three, that the response was probably spoken sometime in the late-second or early-third century, and that each source contains similar responses that differ in significant details. Less clear from the texts is how each source learned of the oracle's response, and whether they preserve altered versions of the same response or three distinct, however similar, responses. Let us turn to the ancient evidence, and recent arguments, concerning the sources and number of oracles. These, I believe, demonstrate that on multiple occasions the Clarian Oracle issued statements that promoted a henotheism in which the Olympians were understood as *angeloi* of a supreme god.

There are differing opinions about the relationship between the city of Oenoanda, the worshippers there, and the oracular response inscribed on the city wall. L. Robert suggested that the inscription was a civic project, and inscriptions from Claros and other cities in Asia Minor indicate that civic delegations were common at Claros, which supports Robert's thesis.[60] M. Guarducci argued that it was the work of an individual, and A. S. Hall similarly argued that whether it was an individual or a small group of worshippers, it was not a civic project.[61] Additional support for Guarducci and Hall's position comes from a dedication found in Phrygia that dates to the second or third century. The inscription on a dedicatory altar states that the Clarian oracle requested that a certain Symmachus and his sons build an altar

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[59] Pelikan (1971) 133–6. On angels as aspects of God in the Hebrew Bible, early Judaism and Christianity: see J. Kugel, *The God of Old* (New York: Free Press, 2003) 5–36; J. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985); A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 60–73.

[60] Robert (1971) 610; on civic consultations more generally, see Lane Fox (1986) 171–81.

[61] M. Guarducci, "Chi è Dio?," *RAL, Cl. Mor.* 27 (1973); Hall (1978) 264.

that looked toward the much-seeing Helios.[62] This is a possible parallel for the Oenoanda inscription because it specifically names the Clarian oracle and because the title "much-seeing Helios" is similar to the "All-Seeing Aether" at Oenoanda. Symmachus' altar indicates that the Clarian oracle received private delegations and gave instructions for dedications. Thus, it is possible that the response inscribed at Oenoanda was communicated to a private person or private delegation. However, whether the Oenoanda inscription was civic or private, epigraphic and literary evidence indicate that the Clarian oracle was particularly active in communicating theological and ritual advice in the late second century. The early third-century date of the latter forms of the Oenoanda inscription indicates that it was carved not long after the oracle was delivered.

Such a short time for transmission is not the case for the other two sources, and it is unlikely that Lactantius or the author of the *Theosophy* went to Oenoanda to look at the inscription. So, scholars have debated how these two authors knew of the oracle, and if it is indeed the same oracle. L. Robert, the first scholar to note the connection between the Oenoanda inscription and the other sources, argued that all three texts record the same oracle. He suggested that the likely source for Lactantius and the *Theosophy* was Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles*, a lost work that appeared shortly before Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*.[63] According to the Christian Eusebius, Porphyry claimed to have made accurate copies of recorded oracles in his *Philosophy from Oracles*.[64]

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[62] Σύμμαχος Ἀντύλ[λου]/κὲ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ Ἄντ[υλ]/λος κὲ Ἀλέξανδρος [κέ]/ Σὺμμαχος κατὰ χ[ρησ]/μὸν Κλαρίῳ Ἀπόλλωνι ἀν[έσ]/τησαν. χρησμό[ς]./ Εἴσατέ μοι βωμὸν π[αν]θηέα τῇδ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ,/ [ε]ἰς αὐγὰς ἀθρέοντα πολυσκόπου ἠελίοιο… Trans. = Symmachos of Antyllos and his sons, Antyllos and Alexandros and Symmachos, in accordance with the oracle, set this up for Clarian Apollo. The Oracle: Set up for me in the land an altar visible from all sides, gazing into the radiance of much-seeing Helios…; The inscription was found in the cemetery at Yaliniz Serai. Published in A. Souter, Greek Metrical Inscription from Phrygia (Continued)," *CR* 11 (1897) 31–2; R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, "Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros," *EA* 27 (1996) no. 19, pp. 33–4. Hall (1978) 267 argued that the All-Seeing Aether at Oenoanda should be equated with Helios. If one accepts his arguments, then Symmachus' Much-Seeing Helios would be but another name for the supreme god promoted at Claros.

[63] Robert (1971) 609. See also A. D. Nock, "Oracles Théologiques," *Revue des études anciennes* 30 (1928) 281–2, who commented on the relationship between Lactantius and the *Theosophy*, arguing that they record the same oracle. On the debate surrounding the date of Porphyry's *de phil. ex or.*, see Garth Fowden, "Late Antique Paganism Reasoned and Revealed," *JRS* 71 (1981) 180.

[64] Eusebius, *PE* 4.7.

Thus, if Porphyry is the intermediary source and if Porphyry's copies were as accurate as he claimed, one could use the commentary provided by Lactantius and the *Theosophy* with a relative degree of confidence in order to decipher the original context of the oracle recorded at Oenoanda.

However, none of the surviving fragments of Porphyry's work mention the oracle in question. In addition, the *Theosophy* does not identify Porphyry as a source, and Lactantius betrays no familiarity with Porphyry's lost work. The latter fact, along with the absence of the word *polyonymos* in Lactantius' quotation, led R. M. Ogilvie to suggest that Lactantius took the oracular response from an intermediary collection of oracles drawn from Porphyry's work.[65] Robin Lane Fox has objected to Ogilvie's suggestion of an intermediary source, on the grounds that there was too little time between the composition of Porphyry's work (last quarter of the third century) and Lactantius' (ca. 308).[66] However, both arguments obscure an important point. There is no reason that Porphyry's lost work has to be the ultimate source for Lactantius' quotation or the *Theosophy*'s. Although Porphyry did compile a famous collection of oracles, ancient sources suggest that other antiquarians and mystics compiled similar collections.[67] One such antiquarian was Cornelius Labeo, who composed a work entitled *de oraculo Apollinis Clarii*, which by name alone would appear to be as likely a source as Porphyry.[68] Therefore, because neither the *Divine Institutes* nor the *Theosophy* identifies its source, it is possible that the authors of these works used any number of oracular collections, which, like the works of Porphyry and Cornelius Labeo, have been lost to time. Rather than identify a single oracular collection as Lactantius' and the *Theosophy*'s

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[65] R. M. Ogilvie (1978) 23. Ogilvie also suggests that, because the term *polyonymos* is missing from Lactantius' quotation, the intermediary source was a Christian one.

[66] R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 171, n. 14.

[67] On the popularity of oracular collections in late antiquity see, P. Athanassiadi (1999) 177–83.

[68] Cornelius Labeo's lost work is mentioned (and perhaps quoted from) at Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.18.19–21. H. W. Parke argued that Augustine might also refer to the oracle recorded at Oenoanda when Augustine, in the *City of God*, states that some pagans, like Labeo, worship demons, although they are called angels by others, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* (London: Croon Helm, 1985), 168, referring to Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 9.19. See also *Civ. Dei* 2.11, where Augustine states that Labeo distinguished between good and evil divinities based on their cult rituals. On Cornelius Labeo's *de oraculo Apollonis Clari*, see G. Wissowa, *RE* 4, "Cornelius Labeo 168" (1901) 1351–2.

source, recent scholarship reveals that there were a number of collections of oracles produced in the third century that later Christian commentators could have used.

In addition, two other sources appear to refer to the Clarian response. These sources do not quote from an oracle verbatim, but they do suggest that the Clarian oracle's theological statements were widely known, perhaps as a result of oracle collections like Labeo's, or Christian references to the oracles, as in Lactantius. John Malalas (6th century) relates that the "Emperor Pharaoh Petissonios" consulted the Pythia with a question concerning who was first among the gods and who was the Great God of Israel. The response was said to have been recorded in the temple at Memphis and to have stated that god was "self-generated and thrice-blessed" and that other gods "belong to a small part of the angels."[69] Malalas states that this oracle came from the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, not Claros, and the oracle's statement about the supreme god and his *angeloi* are somewhat different. However, Malalas' tale appears to reflect a tradition that the oracle of Apollo (whether at Delphi or Claros) espoused a henotheism in which Apollo and the other Olympians were designated as *angeloi* who communicated between the supreme god and humans.

Gregory of Nazianzus appears to refer to a similar response from the Clarian oracle when he states, as proof of the pagan anticipation of Christianity,

> Phoebus prophesizes the destruction of those who are gods no longer:
> Self-Fathered, un-naturally born, without-mother, this one,
> Whoever destroyed my evil force, praising its end;
> O Kastalia and Daphne, let the prophesies of the tree lay idle.[70]

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[69] John Malalas, *Chronicle* 3.65–66, where the response from the Pythia states, "There will have descended from heaven a celestial, everlasting, and imperishable fire that surpasses flame, at which everything trembles—the sky, the earth and the sea, and even the Hell-dwelling demons shudder in fear. This is God, self-fathering, fatherless, a father son of himself thrice-blessed. We belong to a small part of the angels." trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffrys, and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986) 31–2. For Greek text, see *Johannes Malalas: Chronograhia, rec. Ioannes Thurn*, ed. H.-G. Beck, A. Kambylis, and R. Keydell (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000) 46–7. Malalas understands the "Emperor Pharaoh" in question to be he of the Hebrew Exodus. See also Lane Fox (1986) 170–1.

[70] Carmina quae spectant ad alios 2.7.253–5, Migne 37.1571.

As A. Cameron notes, the Benedictine editors of Migne's text stated that Gregory's text was a fabrication.[71] However, Cameron suggests, correctly, that the first lines of this oracle are probably not fictitious. The second line contains language very similar the Clarian oracle recorded at Oenoanda, and the oracle that Gregory is referring to may be the same as at Oenoanda, or one very similar. If so, Gregory's statement does contain a disingenuous reading of the oracle's statement about the nature of the supreme god and the angelic character of the Olympians, but not a complete fabrication. Gregory has turned Apollo's statement about the aethereal nature of the supreme god and the angelic Olympians into a prophecy about the destruction and evil character of the oracle of Apollo. This statement is Gregory's own invention. However, his reference to an otherwise attested oracle, however inaccurate, is further testimony to the widespread awareness of the Clarian oracle's theological pronouncements.

There is currently no scholarly consensus as to whether our sources refer to a single oracular pronouncement, or several. However, the simplest explanation for the discrepancies in our sources is that the oracle spoke on the topic of a supreme god and his Olympian *angeloi* on more than one occasion. Lactantius states that the lines identical to those at Oenoanda were at the beginning of a sixteen-line utterance, and the *Theosophy* places these same lines at the end of a twenty-one-line oracle. D. S. Potter has argued that multiple pronouncements are the only way to explain the discrepancy.[72] He cites as evidence for repeated oracles the Cynic philosopher Oenomaus, whose work, the *Exposure of the Cheats*, contains a passage in which Oenomaus describes the stock oracles given at Claros.[73] Oenomaus' invective alone does not prove that Claros offered similar oracles on multiple occasions. However, that testimony, combined with the evidence discussed

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[71] A. Cameron, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Apollo," *JTS* 20 (1969) 240–1.

[72] D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), Appendix I, 351–5.

[73] Oenomaus' work is referred to by Eusebius, *PE* 5. 22.214A where the bishop of Caesarea cites it as proof of the fraudulent nature of the pagan oracles; for critical edition: see Karl Mras, ed. *Eusebius Werke* 8.1: *Die Preparatio Evangelia* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982) 262–3. Oenomaus' experience, as well as the function of the Clarian Oracle in the later Empire as given more full description in Parke (1985) 142–70. Parke appears to agree with Robert concerning Oenoanda (pp. 166–70) and does not state, as Potter, that Oenomaeus' invective about repetition at Claros helps prove that we have three separate oracular utterances in Lactantius, the *Theosophy*, and at Oenoanda.

above suggests that Claros had a policy of advocating a henotheistic theology that blended such a theology with recommendations for religious practice.[74] The response from Claros recorded in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (composed after 400 CE) reinforces this argument.[75] In Macrobius' work, the learned Praetextatus states that the oracle at Claros responded to a questioner who asks which among the gods should be regarded as Iao. The oracle responded, "Iao is the supreme god of all gods; in winter Hades; at spring's beginning, Zeus; the Sun in summer; and in Autumn, the splendid Iao."[76] By appearing to equate these different deities as manifestations of the same supreme divine principal, the response reveals a henotheistic spirit similar to that of the Oenoanda inscription.

Conclusion

In summary, literary and epigraphic evidence indicates that the Clarian oracle responded to theological inquiries by promoting a henotheism that equated manifestations of the supreme god and stated that the Olympians were *angeloi* who were a small part of the supreme god. The inscription at Oenoanda indicates that the Clarian oracle's advocacy of a supreme god and angelic mediators influenced religious practice, not only the thoughts of late antiquity's intellectual elites. The Christian reception of the oracle's statement, as illustrated by Lactantius and the *Theosophy of Tübingen*, indicates the manner in which Christians could use the same religious terminology as a pagan oracle to express similar religious concepts. The oracular response recorded at Oenoanda and its reception by Christian apologists indicates that the term *angelos* was a term that both Hellenes and Christians used to describe a celestial intermediary.

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[74] Prior to Bean's publication of the Oenoanda inscription, A. D. Nock made a similar suggestion. He noted that the Clarian oracle had a systematic tendency to reconcile the type of monotheism found in Judaism with polytheism, and he stated that such a religious attitude was suited to the late-second and early-third centuries, Nock (1928) 287.

[75] On the dating of the text, see Alan E. Cameron, "The Date and Identity of Macrobius" *JRS* 56 (1966) 25–38.

[76] Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.19–20. φράζεο τὸν πάντων ὕπατον θεὸν ἔμμεν Ἰαώ / χείματι μὲν τ'Ἀίδην, Δία δ'εἴαρος ἀρχομένοιο / Ἠέλιον δὲ θέρευς, μετοπώρου δ᾽ ἀβρὸν Ἰαώ. Text from J. Willis *Ambrosii Theodosii Macrobii: Saturnalia* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963) 105–6.

Translation after P. V. Davies, *Macrobius: The Saturnalia* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969) 131.

Figure 2.1 Wall at Oenoanda with Oracular Inscription (top) and Chromatis' dedication (bottom). Photo: R. H. Cline

Figure 2.2 Oracular Inscription at Oenoanda. Photo: R. H. Cline

Figure 2.3 Chromatis' Dedication. Photo: R. H. Cline

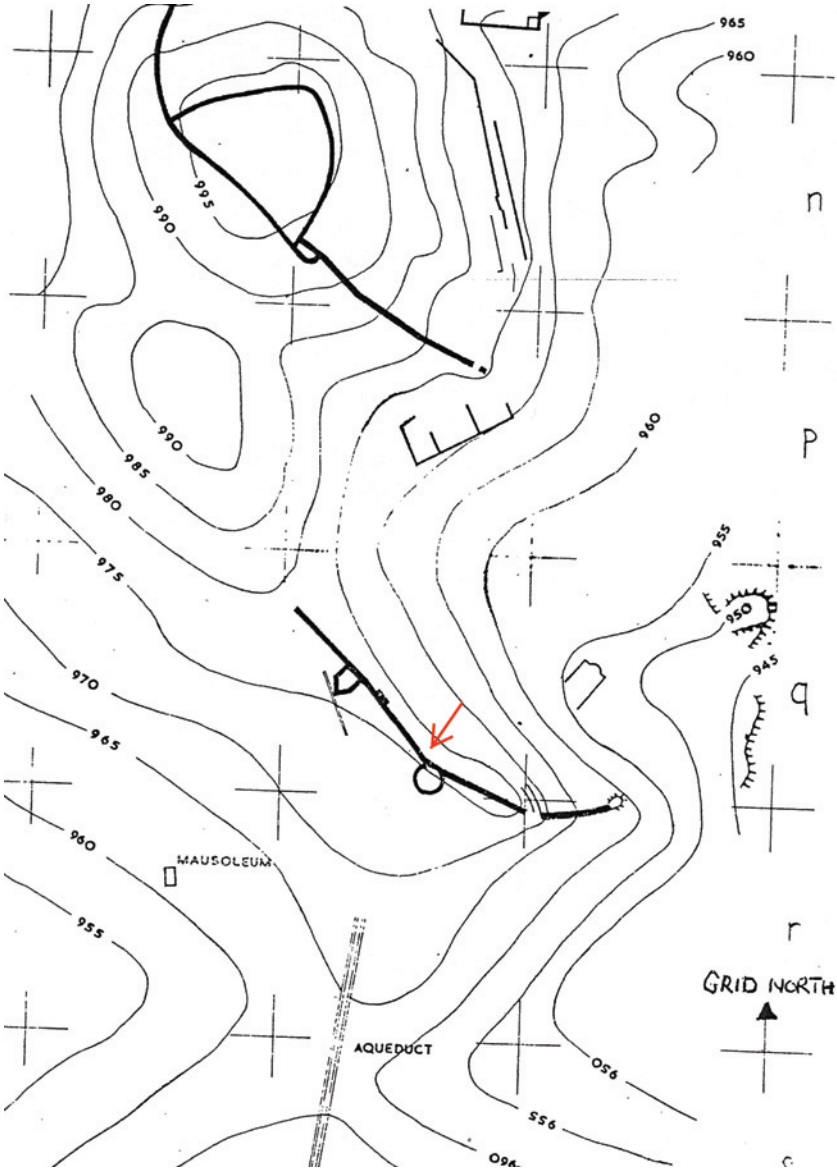

Figure 2.4 Topographical map of Oenoanda. Arrow marks location of oracular inscription and Chromatis' dedication. Image: after Hall (1978) 268, by permission of Rudolf Habelt

CHAPTER THREE

ANGELS OF A PAGAN GOD

As discussed in the previous chapter, the oracular response recorded at Oenoanda suggests that the belief in a supreme deity and attendant *angeloi* existed at a popular level in later Roman Anatolia. The present chapter examines inscriptions intended for display, dated between the late-second and early-fourth centuries CE, which make reference to *angeloi* in pagan religious contexts. These inscribed texts reveal both the widespread nature of *angelos* invocation in Roman-era religions and the function of the Greek language in allowing distinct religious traditions to be expressed in shared terms.

Most, but not all, dedications to *angeloi* come from Anatolia. However, they are not confined to one area within Anatolia, nor are they limited to a single religious tradition. Smaller numbers of dedications to *angeloi* come from the Hellenized regions of Syria, Arabia, and Egypt, as well as the western Mediterranean. Previous studies of pagan angel dedications have focused on identifying the source of such veneration. In order to explain the phenomenon, scholars have alternately argued in favor of Jewish influence, Syrian influence, and local religious development, examples of which I examine below. The present study considers *angelos* inscriptions in light of the theories of Glenn Bowersock and Polymnia Athanassiadi, which suggest that Hellenic language and culture played a crucial role in allowing distinct and divergent religious traditions to communicate similar religious ideas through a common cultural and linguistic medium.[1] The inscriptions examined below share the common feature of using the Greek term *angelos* to denote the function and identity of a spiritual mediator, which, I argue, reveals the role of Hellenism as a medium for expressing local religious traditions in common terms. Thus, rather than argue

[1] Glenn Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) 15–22, with review by P. Athanassiadi, *JRS* 82 (1992) 286–7; P. Athanassiadi, "The Chaldean Oracles," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, eds. P. Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 177–82.

that pagan *angelos* veneration owes its origin to a single religious tradition, the present study examines how the shared religious term *angelos* enabled distinct religious traditions to express similar beliefs in divine mediators in a mutually intelligible manner.

Pagan Angels: Franz Cumont and the Parameters of the Debate

The present chapter continues the work of Franz Cumont, who in 1915 examined the evidence for what he termed "the angels of paganism."[2] Cumont's study of such beings gathered together inscriptional and literary evidence in sufficient quantity to offer some generalizations about this religious phenomenon. Principal among Cumont's contributions to the subject was the demonstration that the belief in divine *angeloi* existed in various manifestations throughout pagan society in the late empire. Cumont showed that the belief in such *angeloi* was not only to be found among later Roman Neoplatonists, but also among Roman soldiers in Egypt and in the hinterlands of Asia and Greece. Cumont's evidence indicated that while pagan angel veneration had regional foci, particularly in Asia Minor, in the cosmopolitan world of the later empire the pagan belief in such *angeloi* could be found in places as far apart as Rome and Syria.

Cumont was also able to draw out some of the principal pagan beliefs concerning *angeloi*. Cumont argued that pagan *angeloi* were, above all, the messengers of the gods, but that they were also believed to be the conductors of souls into the afterlife. Cumont hesitated to argue for a particular origin for the pagan cult of angels, primarily because the origins are difficult to ascertain absolutely. However, with reservations, Cumont suggested that the pagan cult of angels in late antiquity was ultimately Syrian in origin.[3]

Contributing to the study of pagan angels begun by Cumont, F. Sokolowski (1960) gathered together many of the relevant references to divine *angeloi* in Greek literature in order to argue that an unnamed angel who was the recipient of dedications at Stratonikeia in Asia Minor was Hekate. As I discuss below, the *angelos* dedications from Stratonikeia form a significant portion of the inscriptions relat-

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[2] F. Cumont, "Les Anges du Paganisme," *Révue de l'histoire des religions* 12 (1915) 159–82.

[3] Cumont (1915) 161.

ing to pagan angels. Thus, Sokolowski's proposition was a challenge to Cumont's suggestion that the pagan cult of angels was Syrian in origin. As Sokolowski demonstrated, Hekate is described as an angel (*angelos* and *angele*) in ancient literature. In such a role, she communicated between the worlds of the living and the dead, and between Hades, the Earth, and the Olympians.[4] Sokolowski's argument is supported by the presence of a temple of Hekate at Lagina, near Stratonikeia. Against Sololowski's thesis would seem to be the matter of noun gender. The angel dedications are all to a masculine *angelos*, or a neuter *theion angelikon*. However, Sokolowski noted that Hekate is referred to by the masculine *angelos* in Hesychius.[5] Later studies have criticized Sokolowski's identification of Hekate as the unnamed angel. However, Sokolowski's argument remains compelling and his study has the considerable advantage of isolating one group of pagan angel dedications (those from Stratonikeia) with common characteristics and suggesting that they could be referring to an identifiable deity, Hekate. Thus, below I argue that Sokolowski's ideas cannot be dismissed, despite his subsequent detractors.

In a significant contribution to the study of pagan *angelos* veneration, A. R. R. Sheppard in 1980 published a study of the inscriptional evidence for pagan *angeloi* in Roman Asia Minor.[6] Sheppard attempted to determine a source for pagan dedications to *angeloi*, ultimately arguing that Jewish religious terminology lay behind such pagan inscriptions. Sheppard's publication remains an important resource because of its collection and presentation of epigraphic material, most of which did not appear in Cumont's study. However, some of Sheppard's arguments are in need of revision. The need to comment upon Sheppard's ideas is particularly acute because scholars who study aspects of later Roman religion often refer to Sheppard's study, without comment, as the most recent and standard work on pagan angel veneration.[7]

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[4] F. Sokolowski, "Sur le culte d'angelos dans le paganisme grec et romain," *Harvard Theological Review* 53 (1960) 225–9.

[5] §391, where he says that the Syracusans call Artemis, identified as Hekate, "angelon." Sokolowski (1960) 227; This is examples is also noted in *LSJ,* s.v. *angelos*.

[6] A. R. R. Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor," *Talanta* 13/14 (1980/81). In the present work, I have generally used the term *Hellenes* to describe non-Christians and non-Jews, because that was the term used in late antiquity. However, when discussing the works of modern authors, I have attempted to use the terms of the author under discussion.

[7] For example, S. Mitchell, "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (Oxford 1999) 103; Richard Rothaus,

Sheppard argued that while pagan communities in Asia Minor borrowed religious terminology from Jewish communities, non-Jews had no real understanding of the religion from which they borrowed. The problem with such a thesis is that is posits a close relationship between Jewish communities and pagan communities in Asia Minor (thus the borrowing of religious terms), but at the same time argues that the relationship between the two communities was such that the pagans borrowing Jewish terminology did not really understand what it meant.[8] The latter argument seems highly doubtful. Recent scholarship has further demonstrated the integral role that Jewish communities played in many major cities of Roman Asia Minor, thus supporting Sheppard's argument that the pagan cult of angels developed as a result of contact between the traditional cults of Asia Minor and Judaism.[9] However, if adherents of traditional Anatolian religion borrowed religious terminology from Judaism, it seems highly unlikely that they would not understand the ideas that lay behind the words.

In addition, as the previous chapter demonstrated, the term *angelos* is not an exclusively Hellenized-Jewish term. *Angelos*, meaning "messenger," expresses the function of the intermediary in multiple Hellenized religious traditions. In the Septuagint, *angelos* is the translation of the Hebrew *mal'ak*, which also means "messenger."[10] As the examples bellow will serve to illustrate, Hellenized Jewish communities and other religious groups used the term *angelos* to express the role of an intermediary between the human and divine worlds. Although Jewish texts and inscriptions use the term *angelos* to denote an agent of God, the term is Greek, and the Jewish use of the term is indicative of the role that Hellenism played in allowing the Jewish community

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Corinth: The First City of Greece (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 129; and G. Peers, *Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001) 8.

[8] Sheppard referred to the pagan use of the term *angelos* as "uninformed borrowing" and he stated, "[W]e have an example of pagans borrowing some of their religious terms from Jews. In no sense must this be regarded an instance of substantive Jewish influence on a pagan cult, nor as an example of actual syncretism." Sheppard (1980/81) 87.

[9] Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 167–83; Margaret Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diaspora Sourcebook* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 107–76.

[10] For discussion, see J. W. van Henten, "Angel. II" in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons of the Bible*, ed. K. van der Toorn, et al (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 50–1.

to express their religion in Greek terms that were common to several religious traditions in the later Roman world.

Partly because Sheppard's study was breaking new ground, his study does not adequately distinguish between different types of *angelos* inscriptions. As demonstrated below, the *angelos* dedications from Asia Minor come from distinct Anatolian traditions, and multiple religious influences are possible. One aspect of these dedications is their use of the common Greek term *angelos* to describe a spiritual intermediary associated with a local religious tradition. Although Hellenized Judaism, Christianity, Hellenized Syrian religions, and local Anatolian cults all used the term *angelos*, it is impossible to determine the source of influence based on the use of the term. Rather, as the inscriptions below reveal, the use of the term demonstrates the role of Hellenism in allowing different religious traditions to express similar religious concepts in a mutually intelligible religious language.

The views of Cumont, Sokolowski, and Sheppard represent the poles about which scholarly discussion of the pagan *angeloi* has turned. The debate has focused much less on the character and religious ideas of the pagan cult in late antiquity, and has centered instead on the question of the origin of the cult. Stephen Mitchell's recent study of Theos Hypsistos inscriptions offers a compromise. Mitchell argues that there was a native Anatolian cult of a high god and his angel, and that, while this cult was perhaps influenced by Jewish or Syrian ideas about *angeloi*, the ultimate source of the cult is perhaps impossible to determine.[11] Mitchell's acknowledgement of the multiple religious influences active in late antique religion has allowed him to study some of the common religious trends in early Christianity, early Judaism, and later Roman religion without necessarily having to argue a source for specific ideas and the direction in which religious concepts flowed. However, Mitchell's study of Theos Hypsistos and his attendant *angeloi*, like Sheppard's study of pagan angels, too readily folds distinct religious phenomena under a single label to the point where significant religious differences are obscured or ignored.[12] Mitchell

[11] S. Mitchell "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos Between Pagans, Jews, and Christians," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 102–3.

[12] Mitchell (1999) 99, acknowledges that "significant conclusions" may be drawn from the different designations used for Theos Hypsistos in different contexts, but nevertheless his choice to ignore many of these differences obscures rather than clarifies many aspects of later Roman cult.

posits the existence of a cult of Theos Hypsistos, whose adherents he dubs "Hypsistarians." While such a group identity may have existed in fourth century Cappadocia and Syria, there is little indication that such self-identification existed earlier or elsewhere.[13] However, Mitchell groups together all those who left dedications to Zeus Hypsistos at Stratonikeia, to Mên Axiottenus in Phrygia, and to Theos Hypsistos in Athens and Macedonia in a single category that he identifies with the New Testament "God-Fearers," describing their religion as the Cult of Theos Hypsistos.[14]

The inscriptions examined below demonstrate that while a similar theology existed among the religious groups who left dedications to *angeloi*, and while these groups used a common religious vocabulary, sufficient differences exist in the inscriptions such that it is inaccurate to identify all of the dedicators by a single term. The inscriptions do not indicate the existence of a group identity among those leaving dedications to the variously supreme gods and their *angeloi*. The single exception is an inscription, discussed below, that speaks of a group dedicated to the worship of the *angeloi* Hosios and Dikaios. However, the cult of Hosios and Dikaios is distinctly regional in nature, and therefore I maintain that it is inaccurate to speak of a single cult of *angeloi* in late antiquity, in the manner of Sheppard, or a larger group identity among the worshippers of Theos Hypsistos and his angels, as Mitchell has argued. Rather, the dedications, confessional texts, and invocations examined below reveal that similar beliefs about *angeloi* existed among several distinct religious traditions, all of which used

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[13] Mitchell (1999) esp. 121–5. Cf. S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* Vol. II (Oxford: 1993) 67–73. As Mitchell discusses, an example for such a group comes from Gregory of Nazianzus, who states that his father followed the High God (Theos Hypsistos), but was not a Christian or a Jew (Greg. Naz. *Or*. 18.12). Mitchell argues that Gregory's father was "Hypsistarian" and this group should be identified with the *theosebeis*, or God-Fearers, known from the New Testament and numerous inscriptions that associate the God-Fearers with local Jewish communities. Mitchell points out (loc. cit.) that dedications to Theos Hypsistos have been found at the same sites where *theosebeis* inscriptions also occur. While the present author acknowledges a similarity of religious sentiment among these groups, at present none of the epigraphic evidence explicitly links "Hypsistarians" with the *theosebeis*. For example, see, J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and Godfearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987) 138–9, nos. 11–2, who present two dedications to Theos Hypsistos from Aphrodisias in addition to the principal subject of their study, the large (probably Jewish) stele which mentions *theosebeis* and *proselytoi*.

[14] Mitchell (1999) 92–108 et passim.

the common Greek term *angelos* to express the identity and function of a mediator between man and god.

Angeloi *and Theos Hypsistos*

The title Theos Hypsistos (Most High God) is paired with *angeloi* on inscriptions from Asia Minor, Arabia, and the Aegean. *Angeloi* associated with Theos Hypsistos are sometimes difficult to classify by religion, as the title Theos Hypsistos is used to describe Greek deities such as Zeus, as well as the Jewish God in the Septuagint.[15] Diaspora Jews invoked God by this title, along with his *angeloi*, as early as the second century BCE, and such Jewish invocations continued into the late imperial period, when Hellenic dedications combine the same terms.[16]

The possibility that a dedication to Theos Hypsistos and his *angeloi* could be Jewish or pagan or potentially even Christian poses obvious challenges for interpretation. Thomas Kraabel has proposed a method to distinguish between Jewish and pagan usage of the title Theos Hypsistos on inscribed dedications, suggesting that only those dedications with the repeated definite article, as in ὁ θεός ὁ ὕψιστος (The God the Highest One) should be considered Jewish.[17] Kraabel notes that the one indisputably Jewish inscription mentioning Theos Hypsistos (from the synagogue at Sardis) uses this double article formula, whereas more clearly Hellenic dedications to Theos Hypsistos do not. However, Kraabel's method, while potentially helpful for longer inscriptions, does not eliminate the possibility that brief texts without the double article may also be Jewish.[18]

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[15] For Theos Hypsistos as a descriptor of Zeus, see section below, "Angels of Zeus Hypsistos." Theos Hypsistos in the Septuagint: Gen. 14:18 (=Heb. El Elyon), 14:19, 14:20; Ps. 56:3 [57:2], 77:35 [78:35], 77.56 [78:56]; Dan. 3:93 (Theodotion = θεὸς τῶν θεῶν ὕπσιστος, Ar.=3:23); 4:2 (Theodotion); 5:18 (Theodotion); 5:21 (Theodotion); Micah 6:6.

[16] Cf. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, revised English edition (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1985) III.1, pp. 68–70, for discussion of Roman-era Jewish (and non-Jewish) dedications to Theos Hypsistos from the Aegean Basin. For similar dedications from the Bosporan kingdom, see L. I. Levine (1999) *CHJ* III, p. 1010; for Egypt: Levine (1999) 1032–3. See also Y. Ustinova, *The Supreme Gods of the Bosporan Kingdom: Celestial Aphrodite and the Most High God* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 222 and 250.

[17] A. Thomas Kraabel, "Ὕψιστος and the Synagogue at Sardis," *GRBS* 10 (1969) 87–93. The LXX Greek ὁ θεός ὁ ὕψιστος corresponds to the Masoretic El Elyon.

[18] In addition, Kraabel (1969) 91, n. 44, notes that the New Testament uses the term with the double article on four of nine occasions: Mark 5:11 [sic; should be Mark 5:7];

Two examples of such Jewish inscriptions (2nd–1st century BCE) that Kraabel does not discuss but that utilize the double article formula were found on the island of Rhenea, near Delos. The texts are illustrative of the manner in which Jewish inscriptions invoke *angeloi* and they display features that are comparable with pagan invocations examined later in the chapter. The two inscriptions appear on tombstones. They contain the same invocation; only the name of the deceased is different. The same text is repeated on both sides of the tombstones. In addition, above the texts, on both sides, both tombstones feature bas-relief sculptures of two hands, with palms turned outward.[19] The invocation quoted below is for a certain Heraclea; the second is for a certain Marthina. The epitaphs ask for God the Highest and his *angeloi* to avenge the girls' unjust deaths.

> ἐπικαλοῦμαι καὶ ἀξιῶ τὸν θεὸν τὸν
> ὕψιστον τὸν κύριον τῶν πνευμάτων
> καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ἐπὶ τοὺς δόλωι φονεύ-
> σαντας ἢ φαρμακεύσαντας τὴν τα-
> λαίπωρον ἄωρον Ἡράκλεαν, ἐχχέαν-
> τας αὐτῆς τὸ ἀναίτιον αἷμα ἀδί-
> κως, ἵνα οὕτως γένηται τοῖς φονεύ-
> σασιν αὐτὴν ἢ φαρμακεύσασιν καὶ
> τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν, Κύριε ὁ πάντα ἐ-
> φορῶν καὶ οἱ ἄνγελοι θεοῦ, ᾧ πᾶσα ψυ-
> χὴ ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέραι ταπεινοῦτα[ι]
> μεθ' ἱκετείας ἵνα ἐγδικήσῃς τὸ αἷμα τὸ ἀ-
> ναίτιον ζητήσεις καὶ τὴν ταχίστην.[20]
>
> I call upon and pray to God the Most High, to the Lord of the Spirits and of all flesh, (to take action) against those who have treacherously murdered or poisoned the wretched Heraclea, untimely dead, and wickedly poured out her innocent blood, so that the same fate may befall both

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Luke 8:28; Acts 16:7 [sic, should be 16:17]; and Hebrews 7:1. Kraabel does not elaborate on this point, but his last reference, from Hebrews, is revealing as it refers to the God of Melchizedek in the context of the priest's meeting with Abraham, reinforcing the idea that the formula should be associated with Judaism. See also C. Rowland in *The Cambridge History of Judaism (CHJ)*, ed. W. Horbury et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 776–97, for angels in Jewish, Roman-era apocalyptic literature, cf. G. Stemberger on Sadducees at *CHJ*, p. 441.

[19] For a drawing of the Heraclea tombstone, and a photo of the Marthina tombstone, see A. Deissmann, *Light from the East*, 4th ed. (1923, English trans., 1927) 414–5.

[20] Text after *SIG* 3.1181. Also appears at P. Roussel and M. Launey, *Inscriptiones de Délos* (Paris: Champion, 1937) 342–4, nos. 2532.IA–IIB; and *CIJ* 1.725. Heraclea's epitaph is now in Bucharest, that of Marthina is in Athens.

> those who murdered her and their children. You, Lord, who see everything and the angels of God, before Whom every soul on this day abases itself with supplications, (please see to it) that you avenge the blood of the innocent and seek payment (for it) as soon as possible.[21]

Adolph Deissmann noted the Septuagintal language of this inscription.[22] He noted the parallel between the invocation of the angels of God at Psalms 102:20 (LXX) and the invocation above[23] and he compared the phrase "Lord of the Spirits and of all flesh" with the nearly identical phrase at Numbers 16:22 (LXX).[24] Also revealing are the parallels between the language used refer to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and that found in the Septuagint at Lev. 23:29 (LXX), which describes the day as πᾶσα ψυχή, ἥτις μὴ ταπεινωθήσεται ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ. This inscription, and the following Jewish inscriptions, which utilize similar language, suggests that the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures was instrumental in providing the terms in which Hellenized Jewish communities expressed their religious beliefs.[25] The epitaph above invokes Theos Hypsistos and his angels to seek out criminals who appear to have gone unpunished by secular authorities and whose identities may not be known. Although this prayer for vengeance appears to be Jewish, such invocations are not limited to Judaism. As examined below, in Phrygia and Lydia, deities such as Helios and Mên, and their *angeloi*, were the objects of similar requests to right criminal wrongs.

The example above has been identified as Jewish because it appears to refer to the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. It also contains Kraabel's double article formula, which appears only on Jewish inscriptions. However, the following inscribed dedication to Theos

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[21] Translation from Margaret Williams, *The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans: A Diaspora Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 60–1. Williams notes that the text is thought to refer to Yom Kippur. Cf. P. W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (Kampen: Pharos, 1991) 148–9, who also reproduces the text with a translation.

[22] Deissmann (1923 [1927]) 413–24; cf. van der Horst (1991) 149, who summarizes Deissmann's main points.

[23] Deissmann (1923 [1927]) 418.

[24] Deissmann (1923 [1927]) 416.

[25] For further examples of Septuagintal language in Jewish inscriptions, see Paul Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 74–8, who examines several inscriptions which refer to the Septuagint. Such examples indicate that Jewish communities in Asia Minor made use of the Greek translation, rather than the Masoretic text, of the Jewish scriptures.

Hypsistos and his *angeloi,* while probably Jewish, does not contain the same double article formula. Thus it demonstrates the problem of applying Kraabel's rule to every inscription.

> τῷ μεγάλῳ
> Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ καὶ
> Ἐπουρανίῳ καὶ
> τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ
> ἀνγέλοις καὶ τῇ
> προσκυνητῇ αὐ-
> τοῦ προσευχῇ τὰ
> ὧδε ἔργα γείνεται[26]
>
> For the Great, Highest and Supreme God and for his holy angels and for the worshipful house of prayer, these works were done.

Steven Mitchell has suggested that this text was probably Jewish based on the term προσευχή, "house of prayer," which is characteristic of Jewish inscriptions from elsewhere.[27] This combination of terms makes it likely that this inscription is Jewish. However, it is remarkable that such a Jewish inscription uses the same Greek terms to describe God and his messengers as are found in the non-Jewish inscriptions examined below. This observation does not necessarily mean that non-Jews borrowed their terminology from Jewish communities, as Sheppard argued. Nor does it mean that Diaspora communities must have borrowed their religious terms from the Greeks they lived with, as they could find the same terms in the Septuagint. The similarity of terms does mean that both Jews and pagans used the same terms to describe a supreme God and his *angeloi*. The result of this common language is a body of inscriptions that are sometimes difficult for a modern reader to classify according to religious groups. However, ancient dedicators would have known what deity they prayed to, and the existence of such common religious terms provided a common religious language through which display inscriptions could be understood by Jews and other Hellenized religious groups alike.

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[26] Text after S. Mitchell, *RECAM II: The Ankara District. The Inscriptions of North Galatia* (Ankara: British Institute of Archaeology, 1982) 179–80, no. 209b; also appears at *SEG* 31.1080.

[27] Mitchell (1982) 180.

Zeus and the Angel at Stratonikeia

The largest single group of pagan dedications to *angeloi* comes from Stratonikeia in Caria. The present study argues that all of these dedications should be associated with a local cult of Zeus and his *angelos*. In these inscriptions Zeus is called Hypsistos, an epithet also associated with the Jewish God, as discussed above. Sheppard published several of the inscriptions in his study, all of which subsequently appeared in M. Çetin Sahin's *Inschriften von Stratonikeia.*[28] More recently, E. Varinlioglu has published additional inscriptions from Stratonikeia that associate Zeus Hypsistos with an *angelos*.[29] Although all of the inscriptions appear to be associated with the same local cult of Zeus and his *angelos*, they are not uniform in their dedicatory formulae. Four dedications from Stratonikeia contain a dedication to an *angelos* together with Zeus Hypsistos; one displays a dedication to an *angelos* and Theos Hypistos.[30] The title in the latter is the same as those in Jewish dedications. However, because most of these dedications are associated with the sanctuary of Zeus Panamaros, it is almost certain that the title Theos Hypsistos at Stratonikeia refers to a Greek deity rather than the Jewish God. Two dedications are to an *angelos* only, without any accompanying deity. Five dedications are to Zeus Hypsistos and a second divinity identified only as a "theos," and described by such terms as "good" or "royal."[31] Sheppard has suggested that this *theos* be identified with the *angelos* that also appears with Zeus Hypsistos.[32] While it is impossible to make this identification for certain, the pairing of Zeus with single, unnamed divinity, at the same sanctuary where he is paired with an anonymous *angelos*, strongly suggest that Zeus's companion *angelos* is the same entity that other inscriptions term a *theos*. If so, we have corpus of dedications from Stratonikeia

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[28] Sheppard (1980/81) 78–9, 1–6; M. Ç. Sahin, *Inschriften von Stratonikeia* (*DIStr*) Vol. 2.1 (Bonn: Habelt, 1982) 160–3, nos. 1110–20.

[29] E. Varinlioglu, "Inschriften von Stratonikeia in Karien," *EA* 12 (1988) 84–8, nos. 6–11.

[30] *Angelos* with Zeus Hypsistos: Sheppard (1980/81) nos. 1, 2; Varinlioglu (1988) nos. 6, 7. With Theos Hypsistos: Varinlioglu (1988) 8.

[31] *Angelos* without accompanying deity: Sheppard (1980/81) nos. 3, 4. Zeus Hypsistos with a Theos:, Sheppard (1980/81) no. 5 (agatho); (basiliko) no. 6; Varinlioglu (1988) no. 9 (Basili); Varinlioglu (1988) no. 10 (Threptos); Varinlioglu (1988) no. 11 (Theos without adjective).

[32] Sheppard (1980/1980) 79.

that reveals the cultic association of "Most-High Zeus" with an *angelos* that is called "good," "royal," and "god." The *angelos* is never named in these inscriptions, but it is consistently singular, a feature that distinguishes the Stratonikeia dedications from the Jewish inscriptions above and the inscription at Oenoanda, where the *angeloi* are plural.

The dedications date from the second to third century CE, and are typically brief, usually containing only the names of those who made the dedications, the deity for whom the dedication was intended, and sometimes a succinct statement of the reason for the dedication. The texts are usually inscribed on a dedicatory, freestanding stone altar. The following inscription is typical:

> Διί Ὑψίστῳ / καὶ Θείῳ Ἀγ/γέλῳ Νέον / καὶ Εὐφροσύ/νη ὑπερτῶν / ἰδίων[33]
>
> To Zeus Hypsistos and the Divine Angel from Neon and Euphrosyne, on behalf of their household.

As in the text above, most such inscriptions from Stratonicaea are to Zeus Hypsistos and a single *angelos*, usually described as "divine." The angel of Zeus Most High can also be described as the "good angel" as in the following text:

> Διί Ὑψίστῳ καὶ / Ἀγαθῷ Ἀνγέλῳ / Κλαύδιος Ἀχιλ/λεὺς καὶ Γαλατ[ί]/α ὑπὲρ σωτηρί[ας] / μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων / πάντων χαριστ[ή]/ριον[34]
>
> To Zeus Hypsistos and the Good Angel, from Claudius Achilles and Galatia, with all their household, a thank-offering on behalf of [their] salvation.

Suggestions for the identity of the *angelos* of the Stratonikeia inscriptions range from Sokolowski's Hekate to Sheppard's theory of a poorly understood version of Jewish or Christian angels. Although recent studies have largely dismissed Sokolowski's argument, it should not be discounted entirely.[35] As Sokolowski notes, Hesychius states that

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[33] Sheppard (1980/81) 78, no. 2; *BCH* 5 (1881) 182, no. 3; *DIStr,* 2.1, p. 162, no. 1117; Also cited in Cumont (1915) 161, n. 3.

[34] Sheppard (1980/81) 78, no. 1.; Le Bas and Waddington, 515.; *DIStr* pp. 162–3, no. 1118; Also cited in Cumont (1915) 161, n. 3.

[35] For example, Mitchell (1999) 103–8, in his discussion of angels and Theos/Zeus Hypsistos, does not discuss Sokolowski or the possibility that the angel at Stratonikeia is Hekate. Sheppard (1980/1) 79, dismisses the possibility that the *angelos* is Hekate because Hekate's designation by this title is "very rare" and because the "examples of this title clearly designate the bearer as feminine" and the *angelos* at Stratonikeia is

Artemis-Hekate was known as an *angelos*, the masculine form of the term. In addition, a long inscription from Stratonikeia pairs Zeus Panamaros and Hekate, stating that their statues were placed together in the city's council house. The inscription states that the two deities were venerated together by choruses of boys.[36] Thus, because of the angelic functions of Hekate, because of the association of Hekate with Zeus at Stratonikeia, and because of the nearby temple of Hekate at Lagina, it is plausible that the anonymous *angelos* indicated on the inscriptions is indeed Hekate.[37]

The *angelos* is not named, however, and thus it is impossible to say with certainty what deity is implied by such an ambiguous title. These brief dedications give no explanation of the theology behind the votives. The *angelos* is not stated to have any special powers other than, presumably, mediation. The theology may be similar to that declared at Oenoanda, as Mitchell suggests in his recent study.[38] However, the Clarian Oracle speaks of a number of *angeloi*, whereas the Strotonikeia inscriptions refer to one *angelos*. It is likely that the *angelos* associated with Zeus Hypsistos at Stratonikeia was thought of in a manner consistent with Platonic ideas about intermediaries, as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus, Zeus Hypsistos, as a supremely transcendent god, could not come into contact with the material world and depended upon a mediator to bridge the distance between heaven and earth. In such cosmos, the *angelos* as mediator is of critical importance, because the intermediary serves as the only link between the power of the Most High God and the people who need his aid.

The importance of the Divine Angel at Stratonikeia is demonstrated not only in inscriptions that couple the mediator with Zeus Hypsistos, but also in several inscribed dedications to the Divine Angel alone, of which the following dedication is characteristic:

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masculine or neuter. However, as Sokolowski (1960) 227 notes, Hesychius stated that the masculine *angelos* was used to refer to Hekate (Hesych. 391)

[36] *CIG* 2715; = *DIStr,* 2.1, no. 1101. See also F. Sokolowsi, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris: Boccard, 1955) no. 69, pp. 162–5 and M. P. Nilsson, "Pagan Divine Service in Late Antiquity," *HTR* 38 (1945) 65.

[37] On Hekate and angels, and the angelic epiphanies of Hekate, see Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 119–28.

[38] See Chapter 2.

Θείῳ Ἀγγε/λικῷ εὐχαπιστοῦμεν / ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας[39]

To the Angelic Divinity we give thanks for salvation.

Here it is only the *angelos* who is thanked for salvation. While the dedicator probably believed there to be one Most High God, the dedication suggests that the dedicator believed that it was the intermediary who brought one's need for safety to the attention of a god removed from human affairs. In such a cosmology, the mediator, rather than the distant High God, could become the focus of prayer and invocation.

The inscriptional remains of this cult reveal several characteristics of later Roman religion. This is not Homeric paganism. The king of the gods does not walk among men. Rather, the supreme deity is removed from the affairs of mortals. Thus, the *angelos* becomes an important focus of religious veneration. There is no blood-offering mentioned in any of the dedicatory inscriptions. The offerings to the *angelos* and Zeus Hypsistos at Stratonikeia appear to be the inscribed monuments themselves, perhaps combined with a lamp offering, as described in the Chromatis dedication from Oenoanda, or a simple libation or non-living offering.[40] Thus, we can see in this cult of the *angelos* aspects of the changing nature of late antique religious practice that G. Fowden, among others, has observed in other parts of the later Roman empire, whereby the classical ideal of the hecatomb is replaced by a more subdued form of pagan piety that focuses on prayer and personal devotion.[41] In this case, the *angelos* who can carry the wishes of the pious to Zeus Most High was the object of such personal piety.

Angeloi *of Mên*

Similar to Zeus Hypsistos at Stratonikeia, the Anatolian moon god Mên related to the material world through an angel. Two lengthy inscriptions from western Asia Minor reveal the functions of the *angelos* of Mên. The first of these texts describes Mên's *angelos* as an agent who reveals the will of the god. The text is dated to the third century, and it is carved on a stele in white-gray marble (0.85 m. high; 0.37–0.47 m.

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[39] Sheppard (1980/81) 78, no. 3; *BCH* 58 (1934) 337, no. 22; *DIStr* II, 1, no. 1119; L. Robert, "Reliefs votifs et cultes d'Anatolie," *Anatolia* 3 (1958) 115, reprint in *Opera Minora Selecta* Vol. 1 (1969) 414; cf. *Hellenica* 10 (1955) 57, n. 2.

[40] On Chromatis' dedication, see Chapter 2.

[41] G. Fowden, "City and Mountain in Late Roman Attica," *JHS* 108 (1988). See also R. Rothaus, *Corinth: The First City of Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 126–34.

wide), currently in the Usak archaeological musem.[42] A sculpted relief above the text depicts a man on his knees making an offering with his right hand outstretched. A diminutive woman stands behind him with her right hand raised in a position of prayer.[43]

ἠρώτησαν Χρυσέρως κὲ
Στρατόνεικος ἐξ εἰδό-
των καὶ μὴ εἰδότων τοὺ-
ς πατρίους θεοὺς καθὼς
ἡμῖν ἐδηλώθη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀν-
γέλου τοῦ θεοῦ Μηνὸς Πε-
τραείτου Ἀξετηνοῦ· εὐ-
χαριστῶ οὖν Ἀμμιας ὑπ-
ὲρ Διονυσιάδος καὶ ἐθήκομ-
εν (δην.) ἑκατὸν καθὼς ἐπε-
ζήτησαν οἱ πάτριοι θεοί.[44]

Chryseros and Stratoneikos, either knowingly or unknowingly,[45] inquired of the ancestral gods; accordingly, it was revealed to them by the angel of Men Petraeitos Axetenos. Therefore, I, Ammias, give thanks on behalf of Dionysias, and we have dedicated one hundred denarii just as the ancestral gods requested.

The role of the *angelos* in this text appears similar to that of the *angeloi* of the Oenoanda inscription. In both cases, *angeloi* reveal the instructions of a transcendent deity, in the present example, Mên Axetenos. The text does not reveal precisely what was revealed to Chryseros and Stratoneikos, but it appears to involve ingratitude. Perhaps the ancestral gods revealed that Mên or his *angelos* had rendered aid to Ammias or Dionysias for which they had never properly expressed their thanks. The price for averting the danger of an angry Mên was one hundred denarii. Similar confessional texts suggest that Mên was believed to inflict harm on those who did not acknowledge his power.[46]

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[42] G. Petzl, *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens EA 22* (Bonn: Habelt, 1994) 47–8, no. 38, photo.

[43] For large photo and discussion of iconography, see G. Petzl, *Die Beichtinschriften im römischen Kleinasien und der Fromme und Gerechte Gott* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998) 7–9.

[44] Text after Petzl (1994) no. 38; see also *SEG* 41.1039.

[45] E.N. Lane, "Men: A Neglected Cult of Roman Asia Minor," *ANRW* 2.18.3 (1990) 2164, suggests that the phrase ἐξ εἰδότων καὶ μὴ εἰδότων reflects a local Maeonian fear of unwittingly offending the gods.

[46] See Angelos Chaniotis, "Under the watchful eyes of the gods: divine justice in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor," in *The Greco-Roman East: Politics, Culture, Society*, ed. Steven Colvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 19–20, for

As illustrated below, Mên's power could be directed at an unknown criminal through the ritual of erecting a scepter.

The following inscription from western Anatolia is a confessional text that describes the power of Mên and the role that his *angelos* played in opposing thievery. The text is carved on a white marble stele (1.0 m. high and 0.48 m. wide) and states that it was composed in year 249 of the Sullan era, or 164/5 CE.[47] The text appears below a sculpted relief that contains an upper and lower register.[48] The upper register depicts Mên, standing with scepter in hand, beside a cloak that was recovered from a thief. The lower register depicts a man, probably the thief, with his hands raised overhead in an attitude of prayer or supplication.

> Μέγας Μεὶς Ἀξιοττηνὸς Ταρσι βα-
> σιλεύων. ἐπεὶ ἐπεστάθη σκῆ-
> πτρον εἴ τις ἐκ τοῦ βαλανείου τι
> κλέψι· κλαπέντος οὖν εἱματίου
> ὁ θεὸς ἐνεμέσησε τὸν κλέπτην
> καὶ ἐπόησε μετὰ χρόνον τὸ εἱμά-
> τιον ἐνενκῖν ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν καὶ ἐ-
> ξωμολογήσατο. ὁ θεὸς οὖν ἐκέλευ-
> σε δι' ἀνγέλου πραθῆναι τὸ εἱμά-
> τιν καὶ στηλλογραφῆσαι τὰς δυ-
> νάμεις. ἔτους σμθ[49]
>
> Great is Mên Axiottenos who rules in Tarsi! If someone should steal something from the bathhouse, thereupon the scepter will be set in opposition [to him].—Therefore, when the thief had stolen the cloak, after some time he caused the cloak to be restored to the god, and he confessed in full. Therefore the god bid through an angel that the cloak be sold and his powers be inscribed on a stele. Year 249.

As in the previous inscription, Mên communicates his will through an *angelos*. The narrative does not mention how Mên caused the thief to

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a discussion of one confessional text, according to which Mên punished a woman who, for the sake of saving a thief from embarrassment, had not erected a confession stele.

[47] Petzl (1994) 3–5, no. 3, photo.

[48] For larger photo and discussion of the sculpture, see Petzl (1998) 5–7. Very brief description, with clear photo, in F. T. van Straten, "Gifts for the Gods," in *Faith, Hope, and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 102, fig. 46.

[49] Text from Petzl (1994) 3–5, no. 3, who supplies the translation from Sullan to Gregorian dating. Textual translation is mine. See also *TAM* 6.1.159.

give back the cloak, but one may infer that the *angelos* was believed to play a role in persuading the thief to surrender the cloak to the god. Although the "scepter" or Mên could be taken as figurative, recent studies of similar inscriptions from Lydia suggest that a scepter was literally erected as a part of a ceremony that invoked the god to search out and punish offenders.[50] These same studies suggest that such ceremonial invocations were particularly popular when the offender was unknown or when secular authorities failed to punish the offender. In such ceremonies, the property owner can give the stolen goods over to the god, which may help to explain why the *angelos* of Mên ordered that the cloak above be sold.[51] Thus, one may conjecture that the owner of the stolen cloak went to the temple of Mên, requested that the priests invoke Mên to find the thief, and consigned to cloak to the god (and the temple) so that the deity would have a personal interest in the cloak's recovery. Of particular interest to the present study is the function of the *angelos* in the text. The account expresses the power of Mên by revealing his ability to track down thieves and by suggesting that Mên reigns supreme and detached, using an *angelos* to effect his will. Although it is unclear if the *angelos* was invoked as part of the scepter ceremony, the thief and the priests of Mên understood the *angelos* to be Mên's active agent in the material world.

One of the problems in interpreting the texts above, as well as in many inscriptions that mention *angeloi*, is whether the *angelos* in question is a human messenger or a divine one. Because *angelos* has both a mundane and a spiritual meaning, one could argue that Mên's *angelos*, was, in fact, a human messenger that expressed the will of the

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[50] Angelos Chaniotis (2004) 11–14, discusses a text left by the descendants of one Tatias, who had erected the scepter to the gods in Aziotta. Tatias erected the scepter in order to prove that she was being slandered. The gods decided that the rumors were true and punished her. Her descendants requested that Tatias' scepter and curse be removed. They then erected a stele testifying to the power of the gods in Aziotta. See also J. H. M. Strubbe, "Cursed be he that moves my bones," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 44–45, who discusses grave inscriptions from north-eastern Lydia that discuss the erection of scepters in order to prevent desecration of the graves and their monuments. One grave inscription refers to the "scepters of [Mên] Axiottenos." For further examples on scepter invocations, see J. H. M. Strubbe *Arai Epitumbioi: Imprecations against Desecrators of the Grave in the Greek Epitaphs of Asia Minor. A Catalogue* (Bonn: Habelt, 1997) p. 48, no. 53; p. 49, no. 55; pp. 54–8, nos. 64, 65, 67, 69.

[51] Chaniotis (2004) 16, discusses a case in which a disputed object is given over to Mên Axiottenos, so that, Chaniotis speculates, Mên would punish the offender.

god, as Galavotti argued concerning the *angeloi* at Oenoanda.[52] However, the context of the word suggests that *angelos* is used here in a special religious sense, as at Oenoanda and Stratonikeia. In addition, while celestial *angeloi* are the subjects of numerous dedications from Asia Minor, human *angeloi* are not. In the case of Mên's *angelos*, the word appears to describe a celestial intermediary, similar to that of the Oenoanda *angeloi* and presumably, the *angelos* of Zeus Hypsistos venerated at Stratonikeia.

The *angelos* is not, however, the god Mên himself, which Mitchell argues in his discussion of the cult of Theos Hypsistos.[53] Mitchell's argument refers to the latter of the two inscriptions above, and as proof for his case that Mên was regarded as an angel, he cites an inscription from Saittai in Lydia which states:

> εἷς θεὸς ἐ-
> ν οὐρανοῖς,
> μέγας Μὴν
> Οὐράνιος,
> μεγάλη δύ-
> ναμις τοῦ ἀ-
> θανάτου θε-
> οῦ.[54]
>
> One god in heaven, Great Heavenly Mên, great power of the immortal god!

Mitchell does not translate this inscription. However, he comments upon it, stating, "worshippers of the highest god in regions where the cult of Mên was very widespread thus found a way of accommodating the lesser divinity into their scheme of belief." Mitchell thus implies that the μεγάλη δύναμις of the inscription is Mên. One then infers that the "One God" is Mitchell's Theos Hypsistos, to whom, Mitchell suggests, Mên was subordinate. However, "Great Heavenly Mên" appears to be in apposition to "One God in Heaven," and a simpler reading of the last phrase would be "great [is] the power of the immortal god," i.e. Mên. G. H. R. Horsley favors such a reading of the text, describing the

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[52] C. Gallavotti, "Un' epigrafe teosofica ad Enoanda nel quadro della teurgia caldaica," *Philologus* 121 (1977) 101.

[53] Mitchell (1999) 104; 115.

[54] Text after Mitchell (1999) 104; see also *TAM* 5.1.75. The editors of the inscription do not suggest a date, but a date in the second to mid-third century appears likely, based on similar, dated inscriptions.

inscription as a "tripartite acclamation of Men."[55] Indeed, the elevation of Mên to the status of the "One God" is consistent with his use of an *angelos* to express his will, and Mitchell states as much when he notes that angels are a common feature of monotheistic belief.[56]

Phrygian Angels: Hosios and Dikaios

Monotheistic formulas similar to that above appear in connection with the Antatolian deities Hosios and Dikaios, who are occasionally described in dedicatory inscriptions as *angeloi*. A characteristic example is the dedication found at Kula in Lydia (256/7 CE) which states that Stratoneikos Kakoleis is…τοῦ Ἑνὸς/ καὶ Μόνου θεοῦ [ἱ]ερεὺς καὶ τοῦ Ὁσίου καὶ Δικαίου…"a priest of the one and only god as well as of Hosios and Dikaios."[57] Mitchell suggests that this inscription refers to Theos Hypsistos and connects Hosios and Dikaios to that deity's cult.[58] The term Theos Hypsistos could certainly describe a "One and Only God," but the description could just as easily fit Mên, as he was described in the "tripartite acclamation" above.[59] It is more likely that the "One and Only God" is Helios, who is associated with Hosios and Dikaios on the stelai examined below.

Hosios and Dikaios, like Mên, are uniquely Anatolian deities. They are sometimes described as *angeloi*, a term which denotes their role as deities who played an active role in connecting humans with the divine world. They are sometimes depicted as a masculine and feminine pair (as below), but dedicatory inscriptions suggest that their gender was an unsettled issue among their devotees. Dedications refer to them as masculine, as combined neuter abstractions (Hosion-Dikaion), and, in a few instances, as plural deities (Hosioi and Dikaioi).[60] Their role as *angeloi* appears to have generated a feeling of gratitude among the

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[55] G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents*, Vol. 3 (1983) 31–2, no. 7.

[56] Mitchell (1999) 103, "Angel worship was a common symptom of monotheistic belief."

[57] *TAM* 5.1.246.

[58] Mitchell (1999) 103–4.

[59] Horsley (1983) 31–2, notes the similarity between Stratoneikos' formula and that of the Mên inscription above, but does not goes so far as to argue that the "One and Only God" is Mên. This is a more cautious approach than Mitchell's, which attempts to connect almost any and every monotheistic inscription with the cult of Theos Hypsistos.

[60] See Marijana Ricl, "Hosios kai Dikaios. Seconde partie: analyse," *EA* 19 (1992) 73–7, on the names and genders of the deities; 78–84 on their iconography. Hosios and Dikaios, like many local Anatolian gods, remain understudied. Ricl's is the first study dedicated exclusively to them. See also her edition of over one-hundred

pious such that they had their own cultic association. A dedication that speaks of such a society dedicated to Hosios and Dikaios also describes them as *angeloi*, stating, "Aurelius [*vacat*] the Society of Friends of Angels [offers] a vow to Hosios and Dikaios."[61] The dedication was found at Yaylababa Köyü (near ancient Cotiaeum, modern Kütahya); the site is postulated to be a sanctuary for Hosios and Dikaios because of the number of dedications found there.[62] The dedication appears on a white, limestone stele (0.49 m. high; 0.35 m wide). Above the inscription there is a representation of Hosios as a man with a staff and Dikaios as a woman with a set of scales.[63]A bust with a solar crown appears in the pediment of the stele, which suggests that the dedicator associated Hosios and Dikaios with a supreme solar deity. In addition, to my knowledge, this inscription is the only epigraphic testimony for any religious association dedicated to the worship of *angeloi*. As such, it is the only explicit evidence of a group identity among those who left dedications to *angeloi*.

The pair above appears to have a fitting iconography, as Dikaios holds the scales of Justice, and Hosios appears as a holy man with a staff. However, other dedications conceive of Hosios and Dikaios more vaguely.[64] For example, in the following dedication, Hosios and Dikaios appear to be a single angelic being.

[ἡ — — —]νῶν κα[τ]οικία
[.c.6..] καὶ Ἀνγέλῳ Ὁσίῳ
[Δικ]αίῳ εὐχαριστοῦντε[ς]
[ἀν]έστησαν διὰ προφήτο[υ]
[Ἀ]λεξάνδρου Σαϊττηνο[ῦ][65]

…on and Lucia,
to the Angel Hosios
Dikaios, these thank-offerings
erected, according to the [instructions] of the prophet
Alexander Saïttenos

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dedications to the pair, M. Ricl, "Hosios kai Dikaios. Premiere partie: Catalogue des inscriptions," *EA* 18 (1991) 1–70.

[61] Ἀυρ(ήλιος)…Φιλανγέλων συνβι/ώσις Ὁσίω Δικέῳ εὐχην. Text and translation after Sheppard (1980/81) 87–88, no. 8, plate 1 (*editio princeps*); cf. *SEG* 31.1130; Ricl, *EA* 18 (1991) 24–5, no. 48.

[62] Ricl (1992) 24–5; Ricl (1992) 71–3.

[63] For photos, see Sheppard (1980/1981) 89, plate 1; Ricl (1991) 63–3, plate 10, figs. 48–53.

[64] Ricl (1992) 75–84; cf. Sheppard (1980/1981) 91.

[65] From Temrek, near Borlu, in Lydia. Text after Sheppared (1980/81) 90, no. 9. Cf. L. Robert, *Anatolia* 3 (1958) 120.

As in the previous inscription, the text does not state which deity Hosios-Dikaios serve as *angeloi*. Perhaps here too, as the solar deity of the previous dedication suggests, the pair are should be understood as the angels of a sun god. The significance of the Hosios-Dikaios inscriptions for the present study is their use of the term *angelos* to describe an intermediary between the human and divine worlds. In the examples above, the Greek term *angelos*, which the cults of Mên and Zeus Hypsistos also used, expresses the role of a mediator. This reveals both a shared religious vocabulary and the tendency in late antique religion to believe in the necessity of *angeloi* for contacting the divine world and a supreme divinity.

As in the inscriptions above, it is unclear from most Hosios and Dikaios inscriptions precisely what higher divinity they were believed to serve in their capacity as *angeloi*. However, two dedications explicitly reveal that some worshippers associated these *angeloi* with Apollo and Helios. A marble altar from Bozan, dated to the second or third century CE depicts, in sculpted relief, Helios and four galloping horses. Below the relief sculpture is the following dedication to Apollo, Hosios, and Dikaios.

> [θε]οῦ Ἀπόλωνος κα[ὶ]
> [τῶν] ἀνγέλων αὐτοῦ Ὁσίῳ
> [κὲ Δ]ικέῳ Μάντριος, Φον-
> ικός καὶ Ἀσκληπιός,
> ὑποτακτικοὶ θεῶν,
> ὑπὲρ συνοίκων εὐτ-
> υχῶς πρὸς εὐ[χήν][66]
>
> Of the god Apollo and his angels, to Hosios and Dikaios, Mantrios, Phonikos, and Asklepios, cult personnel of the gods, in good fortune, on behalf of their communities, as a thank-offering.

Both the text and the representations of the gods in this inscription make it clear that some of the worshippers of Hosios and Dikaios associated the pair with Apollo in his role as the sun god.

The next inscription also associates Hosios and Dikaios with Helios and reveals why someone might call on their aid.

> ἔτο[υ]ς […]′, μ[η]νὸς ξ-/ ανδικοῦ [—′. — — —]- / ος Γελλίου Στατειλί[α] / ἰδίᾳ γυναικὶ ἀνέστη[σε] / [τὸ]ν βωμὸν καὶ τὴν θύρα[ν] / ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέστησεν / μνήμης χάριν. / Στατειλία ζῶσα προ/νοῦσα παραθήκην /

[66] Text after M. Ricl, "Hosios kai Dikaios: nouveaux monuments," *EA* 20 (1992b) 95–6, no. 1, photo at Tafel 9.1; = *SEG* 41. 1185.

> ἔδωκι τινι ἐρεᾶν π[ρά]/σινον καὶ ψέλλι[α] δύ/ο ἀργυρᾶ· κἂν μὴ ἀπο/διδῇ, Ὅσιον Δίκεον, / Ἥλιε κύριε, ὑμεῖς ἐκδι/κήσατε αὐτὴν νεκρὰν / καὶ τὰ ζῶντ[α].[67]
>
> In the year…in the month of Xandikos,…son of Gellios erected this altar to his wife Stateilia and erected this door from his own funds, in memory. Stateilia, while living and conscious, gave in trust to someone a green woolen garment and two silver bracelets, and unless he returns them, may you [plural] Hosion Dikaion and Lord Helios, avenge her, a corpse, and her living children.[68]

This invocation of Helios and his accompanying *angeloi* of Justice and Holiness reminds one of the Jewish epitaph from Rhenaea. Although the Rhenean epitaph invoked God and his *angeloi* to avenge the more serious crime of murder, in both cases the living beseech a high god and his agents to avenge a crime on behalf of the dead. One could also compare this invocation to the Mên confession texts, because behind the text describing the power of Mên and the function of his *angelos*, lies the story of a crime that had gone unpunished, and a criminal who has not been found. Thus, although the religious contexts of these angel invocations are unique, the functions of the *angeloi* are similar. As the active agents of a High God in the human world, they were called on to assist in answering prayers to find offenders and administering justice.

The *angelos* inscriptions associated with the God of Israel, Zeus Hypsistos, Mên, and Hosios-Dikaios are distinct enough so that one may treat them separately. However, Hellenism and the use of the common term *angelos* to describe an intermediary allowed these distinct religious traditions to express their sentiments in common terms. The implications of such mutual intelligibility are particularly important when one considers that these publicly displayed curses, prayers, and confessions were meant to be read, both on the occasion of their dedication, and thereafter.[69] Hellenization and the use of the common term *angelos* in a religious context allowed passers-by, whatever their religion, to understand what such texts meant by *angelos*. In the case of Zeus Hypsistos, passers-by would realize that these dedica-

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[67] Text after S. Mitchell, *RECAM II* (1982) 201–2, no. 242. Also appears at Ricl (1991) 40–1, no. 88.

[68] Translation: Mitchell (1982) 201, adapted.

[69] On reading public inscriptions, in particular epitaphs, see: Joseph Day, "Towards a Pragmatics of Archaic and Paleochristian Greek Inscriptions," in *Nova Doctrina Vetusque*, edd. D. Kriese and C. Brown Tkacz (New York: Peter Lang, 1999) 249–52.

tions were to intended for Zeus' messenger, a deity that facilitated the supreme deity's communication with humans. In the case of the Jewish invocations on gravestones, passers-by would comprehend that a supreme God had been called upon to act through his angelic agents of justice. In the case of Mên, the confessional texts revealed that if the scepter had been set up against one, there was no place to hide from Mên and a visit from an *angelos* of the god could quickly follow. The inscriptions examined in the following section reveal the existence of non-Christian and non-Jewish forms of *angelos* invocation and veneration outside of Anatolia, and the manner in which Hellenism allowed regional cults to express such religious sentiments in a cosmopolitan language.

Angeloi outside of Anatolia

Although later Roman *angelos* veneration is most strongly associated with Anatolia, dedicatory inscriptions in Greek from Syria, Trans-Jordan, Egypt, and Italy testify to the existence of local cults of *angeloi* that found expression through a common religious vocabulary. An inscription from Gerasa in Roman Arabia (modern Jerash, approximately 34 km. north of Amman), published by Pierre-Louis Galtier, would appear quite at home among the angel dedications from Stratonikeia in western Anatolia. It reads: Διὶ / Ἀγγέλωι, "to Zeus Angelos," or, if the first and second lines are taken as separate dedications, "To Zeus, to the Angelos."[70] The inscription was carved just under the moulding of a small limestone base, which was discovered between

[70] Text from P.-L. Gatier, "Inscriptions religieuses de Gérasa," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 26 (1982) 269–70, no. 1 (ed. pr.); photo: plate 75, p. 501); cf. *SEG* 32.1539, which prefers the translation "Zeus Angelos." Gatier appears to prefer that translation as well, but, (p. 270, n. 4) acknowledges the possibility that the dedication is to two deities, "A Zeus; à l'Ange." Gatier notes the similarity between this title and that of the god of Baalbek as worshipped at Portus and Rome under the name Jupiter Optimus Maximus Angelus Heliopolitanus. Cf. J. T. Milik, *Dédicaces faites par des dieux et des thiases sémetiques à l'époque romaine* (Paris: Geunther, 1972) 433–34, who discusses an inscribed lintel from the Janiculum, which is inscribed [I.O.] M. [Ang]elo [Heliopolitano] Aug[usto sac.] = *CIL* 6.36794, as well as an inscription from the village of Ma'ula, 60 km. NE of Damascus, which records the dedication of a "conch" to τῷ θεῷ Μαλαχη(λ)αλειαν. See below, n. 79. Milik maintains that the last word is a transcription in Greek of the semitic Mal'ak-'El-'aliyân, "The Angel of the Most High God."

the temple of Zeus and the Southern Theatre of Gerasa.[71] Galtier speculated that this inscription indicated that Zeus was worshipped at Gerasa in his angelic aspect.[72] Such a role for Zeus seems possible on analogy with Malakbel at Palmyra, where the *angelos* appears to be more of an aspect of the deity rather than a separate entity.[73] Whether the *angelos* of Gerasa was considered to be a separate entity or an aspect of a supreme deity, at least one devotee of Zeus considered an *angelos* to be a necessary recipient of the dedication in order to insure communication between the human and divine worlds. In the Hellenized Trans-Jordan, a certain worshipper used the common Greek term *angelos* to describe this intermediary according to his function as a messenger between gods and men.

An inscription from Harran in Syria uses the same Greek term to describe the messenger of Ilaalge. The inscription appears on a .64 m. × .50 m. basalt base, where it was carved inside of a bas-relief tabula ansata. The inscription reads:

> Αὐσος Ὀβαιδο/ςυίος οἱ δύο δ/ῶπον ἐπόησ/αν Ἰλααλγῃ καὶ/ τῷ ἀνγελῳ αὐ/τοῦ Ἰδαρουμᾳ[74]
>
> Ausos and Hobaidos his son, the two of them, made this gift for Ilaalge and his angel Idarouma

J. T. Milik, in his publication of this inscription, noted that the deity Ilaalge is known from inscriptions at Petra and is, on one occasion, identified with Dushara, the god of the Nabateans.[75] According the Milik, the name Idarouma signifies "the raised hand."[76] The angel Idarouma is literally the hand of god, his agent and active presence in the material world.

As Glenn Bowersock has commented upon this inscription, it reveals the role of Greek language and culture in allowing a local religious tradition (that of a Nabatean deity and his messenger) to be expressed in

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[71] For a description of these monuments and a map, see Shimon Applebaum and Arthur Segal, "Gerasa," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* v. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993) 472–4.

[72] Galtier (1982) 270.

[73] Galtier (1982) 270, n. 4, referring to Malakbel at Palmyra and Idarouma, the angel of Ilah-al-Ge, a god of the Nabateans, see note 75.

[74] Text after Milik (1972) 428.

[75] Milik (1972) 428–9.

[76] Milik (1972) 431. Milik suggests that Idarouma, the Nabatean Angel of the Raised Hand, may be seen on a coin of the Nabatean king, Malaichos I, described, pp. 431–2, and pictured at plate XIII, 2. Cf. *SEG* 40.1734.

common and international terms.[77] The Greek language played a similar role in allowing Palmyrene religious traditions to be expressed in common terms. On Palmyrene inscriptions, the local deity "Blessed-be-his-name" receives dedications in combination with two "Holy" brothers.[78] A bilingual inscription from Palmyra, as restored by Milik, reveals the manner in which the Greek language could express such a local cult in terms that would be comprehensible outside of Syria.[79] According to his restoration, the dedication to a supreme deity and his holy ones reads in Greek:

Διὶ Ὑψί[στῳ καὶ ἐπηκόῳ καὶ-]
τοῖς δυο[ῖν ἀγγέλοις τοῦ ἁγιασ-]
μοῦ θε[…[80]

To Zeus Hyp[sistos who listens and to]
the tw[o angels of holi-]
ness div[…

Although tentative, Milik's restoration appears to be supported by the legible Aramaic portion of this bilingual inscription, which refers to the "Holy" ones.[81] In addition Milik cites a comparable Aramaic dedication from Palmyra made to angels described as "holy" ones.[82]

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[77] Bowersock (1990) 30.

[78] Milik (1972) 194: Aramaic, *qdyš*.

[79] There are indications of Syrian angel veneration at Rome as well. The area of the so-called Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum in Rome produced the following inscription.

sac(rum) Aug(usto) / Iovi Maleciabrodi(tano?)/ M. Oppius Agroecus/ et T. Sextius Agathangel/ [us d(onum)] d(ederunt)

M. Oppius Agroecus at T. Sextius Agathangelus [Good-angel] gave the sacred gift to the revered Jove Maleciabroditanus

The inscription records the gift of a man with an angelophoric surname to a Jupiter Maleciabrodianus. The name Maleciabroditanus appears to be a combination of the Semitic "Malek" with the toponym Iabroditanus, most likely a place in Syria. Thus, this is a syncretistic Romano-Syrian Jupiter similar Jupiter Heliopolitanus. The deity is worshipped by someone whose final name is the Latinized form of a Greek word meaning "The Good Angel." *CIL* 6.36792 = *ILS* 9282. Discussion of toponym in M. Paul Gauckler, "Le bois sacré de la nymphe Furrina," *CRAI* (1907) 147–8. Cf. the dedication from Berytus: I(iovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)/ Malechiabrudeno, *AÉpigr* 1950, no. 232. For the Syrian sanctuary see, R. Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 188–94, with inscriptions from the sanctuary at *CIL* 6.36791–36805a. See also note 69 above.

[80] Text after Milik (1972) 195. Editio princeps: Henri Seyrig, *Syria* XIV (1933) 297, no. 7.

[81] Milik (1972) 195.

[82] Milik (1972) 195, mlk *qdyš*.

Although the restoration of the previous inscription is tentative, a dedicatory inscription left by Syrians at Coptos in Egypt further reveals the manner in which Syrian religious traditions found expression in the Greek language. Apparently left by Emesenes serving with the 3rd Gallic and 1st Illyrian legions, the dedication reads as follows:

ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς τῶν ἀνγέλων Ἐμεσηνοὶ ἀνέθηκαν·
νόοις τὸν ἀρχειερέα Διονῦσιν ἐν τῇ καλῇ ἡμέρᾳ μνῆσθη
Ἀραβία· Βάσος ἔγραψεν μεγάλῃ τύχῃ τῶν ἀνγέλων·
ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῆς οὐιξιλλατίωνος λεγ(εώνων) γ΄ Γαλλικῆς καὶ α΄ Ἰλλυ-
ρικῆς τῶν ὑπὸ Οὐικτωρίνον πραιπόσιτον·
ἔτους ζκχ΄ μηνὸς
Λώου ει[83]

The Emesenes dedicated [this] as a prayer for the *angeloi*;
With hearts towards the chief priest Dionysis, on the auspicious day,[84] Arabia was remembered. Basos wrote this for the good fortune of the *angeloi*.
On behalf of the safety of the vexillationes of the legions III Gallica and I Illy-
rica under the Praepositus Victorinus.
Year 627, of the month
Loos, the 15th
[9 June, 316 CE][85]

Although the religious content of this inscription suggests that these *angeloi* are celestial intermediaries, André Bernard suggested that the *angeloi* were human messengers, serving with the Roman legions, on behalf of whom the men of Emesa left this prayer.[86] While such an interpretation is possible, it is unlikely, as it leaves this dedicatory inscription without any divine recipient. However, the possibility that

[83] Text after André Bernard, Les portes du désert: recueil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna (Paris: CNRS, 1984) 253. See also ILS 8882.

[84] On this phrase, see Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear, "Inscriptions militaries d'Aulutrene et d'Apamée de Phrygie," in *La hiérarchie (Rangordnung) de l'armée romaine sous le haut-empire* (Paris: de Boccard, 1995) 60, who suggest that it may refer to the day on which a yearly sacrifice was made, as in a formula from Palmyra that refers to τῇ ἀγαθῇ ἡμέρᾳ, "the good day."

[85] Year 627 of the Seleucid calendar (see *ILS* 8882, with Dessau's notes), which Bernard (1984) 253 equates with 9 June, 316 of the Gregorian calendar.

[86] Bernard (1984) 91–2. The Emesenes serving in Egypt may also be referred to in an inscription dated to 323, see Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear, "Inscriptions militaries d'Aulutrene et d'Apamée de Phrygie," in *La hiérarchie (Rangordnung) de l'armée romaine sous le haut-empire* (Paris: de Boccard, 1995) 60–1.

angelos could refer to human messengers emphasizes the ambiguity of a term that possessed the mundane meaning of "messenger" in addition to the religious and technical meaning of "messenger of god."

Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear, in the most recent commentary on the text, agreed with previous commentators that *angeloi* refers to celestial intermediaries and not human messengers.[87] They also suggest that Dionysis was a priest of the Emesene deity, Elagabal, which seems a likely possibility.[88] In any case, the deity to whom these *angeloi* belong, while particular to this group of soldiers from Emesa, received dedications in an international language quite far from home. The cult of this deity and his *angeloi* are Syrian in origin, but this prayer-offering utilizes the Greek language and the term *angelos* as the common term that denoted a divine intermediary in the Hellenized Roman Empire. Outside of Syria, in Hellenized Egypt, the cult of these men from Emesa found expression in terms common to cults in other areas of the Hellenized world. Although the cult that these soldiers practiced was particular to Emesa, the term *angelos*, was understood in Anatolia and Syria, among different religious groups, to refer to an intermediary between a supreme god and humans. Thus, this and other Semitic religions became internationalized through Hellenism and the use of the Greek language to express the concept of a divine mediator.

An inscription carved on a column discovered at Ostia, the port city of Rome, is indicative of how far afield the Syrian cult of angels travelled. The inscription reads:

> I[ovi] O[ptimo] M[aximo]/ Angelo Heliop[olitano]/ pro salvete/ imperator[um]/ Antonini et/ Commodi/ Augg / Gaionas / D[onum] D[edit][89]
>
> To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Angelus Heliopolitanus, for the safety of the Emperors Antoninus and Commodus, Augusti. Gaionas made the dedication.

The dedication indicates that the inscription dates between 177 and 180, the years in which both Marcus Aurelius (Antoninus) and Commodus were Emperor and Augustus. Jupiter Optimus Maximus Angelus Heliopolitanus appears to be a Syrian deity that is Romanized

[87] Michel Christol and Thomas Drew-Bear (1995) 59–61. Likewise, Milik (1972) 197.
[88] Christol and Drew-Bear (1995) 60.
[89] *CIL* XIV.24. Restorations and translation mine.

partly through the adaptation of the Greek term *angelos* into Latin as *angelus*. Jupiter Optimus Maximus Angelus is strikingly similar to the Greek Zeus Angelos, a dedicatory title known from Jerash in Arabia, discussed above. In that case, the title *angelus* appears to stress the intermediary quality of the deity. It would appear to do so in this case as well.

The Latin *angelus* is a transliteration of the Greek word for messenger, rather than a translation from Greek into Latin. This suggests that the term *angelos/angelus* has taken on a specifically religious meaning in Latin and is not the equivalent of a Latin word for messenger, such as *nuntius*. The last title, Heliopolitanus, indicates a Syrian origin for this particular conception of Jupiter. Heliopolis is of course the Greek name for Baalbek, the famous sanctuary in Roman Syria. This dedication, therefore, is evidence of the spread of cult of the god of Baalbek, and the Syrian conception of *angeloi*, to the capital of the Empire. As in the previous examples, this regional religious tradition was able to communicate its particular religious concepts through the (Latinized) Greek language and the shared term for celestial intermediary: *angelus*.[90]

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[90] Other dedications to Jupiter Helopolitanus from a "Gaionas" have been discovered in the area of the so-called Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum, see Youssef Hajjar, *La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek* Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 257–390 and Nicholas Goodhue, *The Lucus Furrinae and the Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1975) 7–12. The following inscription was also found in the Syrian Santuary:

> sac(rum) Aug(usto) / Iovi Maleciabrodi(tano?)/ M. Oppius Agroecus/ et T. Sextius Agathangel/ [us d(onum)] d(ederunt)
>
> M. Oppius Agroecus and T. Sextius Agathangelus [Good-angel] gave the sacred gift to the revered Jove Maleciabroditanus

The inscription records the gift of a man with an angelophoric surname to a Jupiter Maleciabrodianus. The name Maleciabroditanus appears to be a combination of the Semitic "Malek" with the toponym Iabroditanus, most likely a place in Syria. Thus, this is a syncretistic Romano-Syrian Jupiter similar to Jupiter Heliopolitanus. The deity is worshipped by someone whose final name is the Latinized form of a Greek word meaning "The Good Angel." *CIL* 6.36792 = *ILS* 9282. Discussion of toponym in M. Paul Gauckler, "Le bois sacré de la nymphe Furrina," *CRAI* (1907) 147–8. Cf. the dedication from Berytus: I(iovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)/ Malechiabrudeno, *AÉpigr* 1950, no. 232. For the Syrian sanctuary and Gaionas see, R. Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 188–94, with inscriptions from the sanctuary at *CIL* 6.36791–36805a. See also note 70 above.

Conclusion

The inscriptions examined in this chapter reveal the manner in which distinct cults and religious traditions in the Aegean, Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia made use of the common Greek term *angelos* to express the religious concept of a mediator between humans and a supreme god. In the case of the dedications to a Syrian or Arabian god and his *angeloi*, the original language of the cult, and perhaps the native language of the dedicators, was Semitic. However, a shared Greek religious vocabulary allowed Semitic religious traditions to be expressed using the same term employed by the worshippers of *angeloi* in Asia Minor.

Previous studies of non-Christian and non-Jewish angel veneration have attempted to identify a source for such practices or trace a path of influence from one religious tradition to another. Sheppard argued that pagan *angelos* veneration in Asia Minor developed as a result of Jewish influence and the borrowing of Jewish terminology that pagan communities did not fully comprehend. Cumont, while stressing the difficulty in determining an origin for such cult activity, suggested that the pagan cult of *angeloi* was ultimately Syrian in origin. While religious borrowing and syncretism certainly occurred in late antiquity, it is impossible to trace a path of religious borrowing for *angelos* veneration in the late empire. Based upon presently available evidence, neither inscriptions nor literary sources reveal the origin of non-Christian and non-Jewish *angelos* veneration. Rather, the epigraphic evidence suggests that such practices took distinctly regional forms, all of which used the Greek term *angelos* to express the concept of a mediator between heaven and earth. On a practical level, a shared Greek language and the common term *angelos* would allow those of different religious traditions to comprehend the curses and prayers to *angeloi* displayed on public inscriptions, such as those examined in this chapter. Thus, Hellenism granted local religious traditions the means to express themselves internationally in a mutually intelligible manner.

The *angelos* inscriptions examined in the present chapter can be identified by religious tradition. The following chapter examines inscriptions and dedications to *angeloi* that are ambiguously Christian, Jewish, both, or neither. The existence of such religiously ambiguous inscriptions, when considered in light of the pagan inscriptions

examined in the present chapter, will serve to illustrate the problem that the Christian church faced in the fourth and fifth centuries, as it attempted to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian angel veneration. It is to this challenge for the early Christian church that the latter chapters of the present study will turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANGELS OF THE GRAVE

This chapter examines Roman-era grave inscriptions that name or invoke *angeloi*. The chapter interprets those inscriptions in the context of literary evidence for Roman beliefs concerning tutelary spirits, guardian *angeloi*, and escorts for the dead. The grave inscriptions come from the Aegean islands of Thera (Santorini) and Melos, Eumenia in Asia Minor, Thessaly, and Rome. The funerary inscriptions from Melos, Eumenia, and Thessaly invoke *angeloi* as protectors of the tomb.[1] The fresco from the catacomb of Praetestato (Praetextatus) near Rome illustrates the role of an *angelus bonus* in escorting the deceased to a blessed afterlife.[2] The Theran epitaphs are more problematic, and their interpretation concerns a great deal of this chapter.[3] By comparing the Theran epitaphs with other funerary invocations of *angeloi* and with later Roman discourse on the nature of tutelary spirits, I suggest that the *angeloi* of the Theran epitaphs should be understood as the deceased themselves, as well as protectors of the grave. As discussed below, literary and epigraphic evidence suggests that the Theran *angeloi* could have been believed to protect the faithful in life,

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[1] Melos: H. Grégoire, *Recueil des Inscriptions Greques-Chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1924), 62–3; Georges Kiourtzian, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes des Cyclades: de la fin du III^e^ au VII^e^ siècles après J.-C.*, *Travaux et Mémoires de Centre de Recherche d' Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 12* (Paris: de Boccard, 2000), 87–93. Eumenia: A. R. R. Sheppard, "R.E.C.A.M. Notes and Studies No. 6: Jews, Christians, and Heretics in Acmonia and Eumenia," *Anatolian Studies* 29 (1979): 174–6. Thessaly: Denis Feissel, "Notes d'epigraphie chretienne (II)," *BCH* 101 (1977): 213–4. Cf. *IG* IX 2, 991.

[2] See above, Chapter 1; E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period: The Archaeological Evidence from the Diaspora*, vol. 2 (New York: Bollingen, 1953), 45–50, figures 839–43.

[3] Among the earliest publications see: F. Frhr. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Thera: Untersuchungen, Vermessung und Ausgrabungen*, vol. 1: Die Insel Thera in Altertum und Gegenwart (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899), 178–82; F. Frhr. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Thera: Untersuchungen, Vermessung und Ausgrabungen*, vol. 2: Theraeische Graeber (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1903), 67–8. More recent publications: Grégoire (1924) 56–62; Margherita Guarducci, "Gli "angeli" di Tera," in *Mélanges hélléniques offerts à Georges Daux* (Paris: Boccard, 1974), 147–54; Kiourtzian (2000) 247–82.

to unite with the souls of the deceased upon death, to escort the soul to the afterlife, and to protect the tomb against future violation.

The epitaphs examined below are remarkable both for the variety and the ambiguity of their religious identity. For example, scholars have categorized the Theran *angelos* epitaphs as pagan, Christian, and even Gnostic, as I discuss below. The epigraphic association of *angeloi* with tombs and with the afterlife in pagan, Christian, and Jewish traditions reveals part of the religious *koiné* of late antiquity. The shared use of the word *angelos* reveals the manner in which the Greek language facilitated the communication of religious ideas among regional and ethnic religious traditions. Each of the funerary *angelos* invocations examined here should be understood in terms of its local religious and funerary context, as the invocations may differ in terms of the purpose or in terms of the relationship of the *angelos* to the deceased. Yet in each of the following cases the composer chose to express the concept of a spiritual intermediary in religious terms common to each tradition, thus exemplifying how, in late antiquity, Hellenism could provide the means for expressing divergent religious concepts in universal terms.

The funerary inscriptions examined in this chapter provide an indication of beliefs about *angeloi* outside of literary sources. Only rarely have scholars been able to comment on late antique religious beliefs apart from those expressed in literature produced by the learned elite resident primarily in the urban centers of the empire. The following investigation of funerary invocations of *angeloi* reveals that similar beliefs about companion *angeloi*, guardian *angeloi*, and the conception of the soul as *angelos* existed among the literary elite of the late empire and the residents of the provinces whose voices are not recorded on the page.

Angels of the Grave at Thera

A literate visitor to third-century Thera who entered a graveyard near the Roman-era city, would have found himself in the midst of *angeloi*. At least, that is what the epitaphs would have told him. Upon closer inspection, the visitor would have found that the *angelos* named on the tombstones was often associated with a particular person. Perhaps the visitor would have been able to associate the tombstones with a local religious group, whose beliefs concerning *angeloi* made the meaning

of these epitaphs perfectly clear. In the present, we are not so fortunate. The religious group with which the Theran epitaphs containing the word *angelos* should be associated is impossible to determine with certainty, as the following survey of the debate over the Christianity, paganism, or Gnosticism of the epitaphs demonstrates. The precise meaning and purpose of the word *angelos* on the (approximately) sixty Theran *angelos* stelai is also difficult to ascertain both due to the brevity of the inscriptions and because of the variety of beliefs about *angeloi* current in late antiquity. However, this study argues that it is possible to hypothesize both the meaning and purpose of the Theran epitaphs in spite of the ambiguity of the epitaphs' religious identity.

Most of the Theran *angelos* grave stelai were found in the region of Sellada, the necropolis of the Roman-era city on Thera.[4] Georges Kiourtzian has published the most recent epigraphical study of the Theran epitaphs containing the word *angelos*, as part of his larger study of Christian inscriptions in the Cyclades.[5] He suggests that the various styles of *angelos* gravestones date from the late-second to early-fourth century.[6] Kiourtzian's collection reveals that of sixty such epitaphs, forty-five contain the names of the deceased in the genitive case, preceded by the word *angelos* in the nominative case.[7] In addition, one

[4] See Hiller von Gaertringen (1899) 180–1; (1903) 67–9.

[5] Georges Kiourtzian, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes des cyclades, de la fin du III^e au VII^e siècle après J.-C.* (De Boccard: Paris, 2000) 247–82. The most common spelling on the term at Thera is ἄγγελος, with ἄνγελος as a common variant that reflects pronunciation, as do (presumably) the fewer instances of ἄγγελες, ἄγγελες, ἄγγελου, ἄγγλες, and ἄγελος. See Kiourtzian (2000) 273 for a breakdown of spelling variations according to stele typology.

[6] The quality of the grave inscriptions, and the stones upon which they were carved, varies widely. While it is temping to see a progression in the styles of these stelai from more to less ornate (or vice-versa), such a chronology cannot be supported based on the archaeological contexts of the stelai or letter-styles of the epitaphs. Because of this, Kiourtzian (2000) 247–8, groups the stelai into four categories (A–D) of descending degrees of ornamentation. The first category contains stelai with triangular pediments and acroteria, the second and third categories stelai with triangular pediments and rounded crowns without acroteria, and the last category contains a great number of stelai of rectangular shape, some of which feature incised decoration that imitates the more costly pediments and acroteria of the first category. Kiourtzian does, however, suggest that examples from his first category (the most ornate) could date to the end of the second century, and some examples of his last category (the least ornate) could date to the early fourth century. Thus, one could construct a tentative typology in which the *angelos* stelai become simpler over the course of the third century.

[7] The sixty grave inscriptions published by Kiourtzian feature forty-seven different names. Thirty of the names are male, and fourteen are female. One name is of indeterminate gender.

epitaph displays the name of the deceased and the *angelos* both in the genitive.[8] A unique variation on the formula displays the word *angelos* in the nominative, followed by two female names in the genitive case.[9] The epitaphs do not mention the families of the deceased. Thirteen epitaphs are even briefer, containing the word *angelos* alone,[10] in nine instances in the nominative case, and four instances in the genitive case.[11] The epitaphs do not specify the relationship between the *angelos* and the deceased, the type of *angelos* intended, the religion of the interred, or the reason why *angelos* was inscribed on the gravestone. In summary, the Theran epitaphs are frustratingly brief for those seeking comprehend the grave stelai.

A few of the epitaphs contain additional phrases or words that have been at the center of the debate over the religious identity of the tombstones, a subject treated more fully below. One of these described the deceased as a πρεσβῦτις, i.e. "eldress."[12] Two inscriptions contain "heroization" formulas, in which the deceased are described as having been "heroized."[13] And one epitaph contains the word *abaton*, or "inaccessible dwelling place."[14] Despite previous scholars' attempts to use these longer epitaphs to answer the question of religious identity, such epitaphs cannot answer such a question for certain. However, the longer, athematic epitaphs do offer clues as to the meaning of the word *angelos*.

Religious Identity

The earliest studies of the Theran eitaphs assumed that the grave stelai belonged to Christians.[15] While this is a possibility, the lack of unam-

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[8] Kiourtzian (2000) 251, no. 7.

[9] Kiourtzian (2000) no. 53.

[10] In most cases, it appears that the name of the deceased was never inscribed; although in some cases the name of the deceased may have been effaced or may be missing, as in Kiourtzian (2000) nos. 38 and 42.

[11] Nominative: Kiourtzian (2000) nos. 15, 19, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38 [based on restoration], 39, 42 [fragmentary restoration]. Genitive: Kourtzian (2000) nos. 33, 34, 35, 40.

[12] Grégoire (1922) no. 167; *IG*, XII. 3. 933; *DACL* I.366, I.2142. Kiourtzian (2000) no. 43.

[13] Grégoire (1922) 59, no. 172 (= *IG* XII. 3. 942, = Kiourtzian (2000) 256, no. 20, no photo). Kiourtzian (2000) 266, no. 45, plate 60 [= Feissel (1977) 209–12, figure 1 (editio princeps)].

[14] Kiourtizian (2000) no. 41. (= *IG* XII. 3. 455).

[15] Hiller von Gaertringen (1899) 181–2; Grégoire (1922) 56–8. One notable exception is Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan

biguous religious symbols, prayers, invocations, or liturgical phrases on the Theran *angelos* stelai has led to a century of inconclusive debate over the religious identity of the interred.[16] Of the sixty *angelos* grave stelai in Kiourztian's publication, thirty-nine exhibit no surviving ornamentation. However, twenty-one stelai contain a symbol, placed in a stylized pediment, above the epitaph. In most cases, this symbol takes the form of a simple cross-in-circle design, similar to a "cross-bar theta."[17] Scholars who interpret the Theran *angelos* grave stelai as Christian monuments generally choose to understand this symbol as a local form of the cross.[18] In support of this argument, one of the symbols appears to have a loop at the top of the cross, thus making a "chi-rho" symbol, but as A. Deissmann long ago noted, that pious Christians might have carved the loop at a later point in time, a possibility that Grégoire himself admitted.[19] Because of the ambiguity of the symbols and the word *angelos*, Henri Grégoire argued that the cross-in-circle symbol (and the *angelos* epitaphs generally) should be

(Peabody: Hendrickson, 1927; reprint, 1995), 280, n. 1. Deissmann regarded the Christianity of the epitaphs to be an open question.

[16] As is discussed more fully below, the major contributors to this debate are: H. Grégoire (1922) 56–8, who argues that the epitaphs are Christian; M. Guarducci argues that the epitaphs are pagan in "Anges," *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 15 (1939) 79–89; Guarducci gives similar arguments more mature treatment in "Gli 'Angeli' di Tera" in *Mélanges offerts à Georges Daux* (Boccard: Paris, 1974) 148–55. Recent support for Grégoire's Christian interpretation has been published by D. Feissel, "Notes d'épigraphie Chrétienne (II)," *BCH* 101 (1977): 212. Kiourtzian (2000) 277– 82, suggests that the Therans were influenced by Gnostic ideas, see below pp. 100–1.

[17] Twelve stelai contain what Kiourtzian terms a rosette (many of which appear more like the cross-in-circle than a rosette), seven stelai display a plain cross-in-circle symbol, one stele contains an inscribed circle, and one stele displays a cross-in-triangle symbol, carved in the middle of the stele rather than in the pediment.

[18] For example, Grégoire (1922) 56–7; no. 183, who noted one example of the cross-in-circle where a loop appears to be carved at the upper end of the vertical line of the cross, thus forming a "chi-rho" symbol, or as Grégoire put it a "croix monogrammatique." Grégoire argued that because of this single example of a Christianized form of the rosette symbol, all of the cross-in-circle symbols should be understood as local versions of the Christian cross.

[19] A. Deissmann (1927) 280, n. 1, upon examining the Theran stelai, considered it highly probable that the loop had been carved later. Grégoire (1929–1930) 644, admits this possibility. J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique,* in *Revue des études grecques* 54 (1941) 254, n. 106, support Grégoire's assessment of the "*croix monogrammatique*." See also L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11–2 (1960) 432, n. 2. D. Feissel (1977) 212, based upon a photograph published by D. I. Pallas, *Cahiers archéologique* 24 (1975) 3, figure 2, (not included in Feissel's article) maintained that the chi-rho cross was contemporary with the *angelos* inscription.

understood as "crypto-Christian."[20] According to Grégoire's thinking, such crypto-Christian gravestones were necessary before the Peace of the Church, but following the Edict of Milan, Christians could be more explicit and publicly exhibit a chi-rho symbol. Kiourtzian has challenged the idea that one of the symbols is a chi-rho at all, however, and he maintains that the "loop" of the chi-rho is really nothing but an ordinary "chip" in the stone.[21] Kiourtzian's opinion on this matter would appear valid, as he is the first scholar since Deissmann to publish a photograph of the stelai, according to which the loop looks indeed like damage to the stone.

M. Guarducci was the first scholar to challenge Grégoire's Christian interpretation of the cross–in-circle symbol.[22] She argued that the cross-in-circle should be understood as a stylized rosette. This interpretation was part of Guarducci's larger argument that the Theran grave stelai were pagan monuments, and while Guarducci failed to make the case that the grave stelai belonged to pagans, Guarducci successfully undermined Grégoire's Christian interpretation of the cross-in-circle symbol. Guarducci noted that other grave stelai have what is certainly a rosette in the pediment, the same location where other stelai exhibit the cross-in-circle symbol.[23] Thus, the cross-in-circle symbol found on the *angelos* grave stelai may be a schematic representation of a more difficult to execute, and therefore more expensive, rosette. Guarducci's suggestion that the cross-in-circle symbol is a stylized rosette is almost certainly correct, as Kiourtzian's publication of quality photographs makes clear.[24] Guarducci also observed that the same stylized rosette could be found on numerous, older pagan tombstones from Thera.[25] Indeed, rosettes, both stylized and ornate, appear on a number of later Roman grave monuments in other areas of the empire, where the rosettes are typically understood (in a pagan context) as symbols

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[20] H. Grégoire, "'Ton Ange' et les anges de Théra," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929–1930) 644.

[21] Kiourtzian (2000) 250–1, "Un examen minutieux de la stèle sur place m'a absolument convaincu que la boucle du prétendu *rho* n'est en fait qu'une banale épaufrure."

[22] Guarducci, "Anges," *Studi e Materiali di storia delle religioni* 15 (1939) 79–89; Guarducci refines her arguments in Guarducci (1974) 147–57.

[23] Guarducci (1974) 149.

[24] Compare for example, Kiourtzian (2000) nos. 1–3 (plate 52) with nos. 23–25 (plate 56).

[25] Guarducci (1974) 149–50.

of good-fortune in the afterlife.[26] Thus, while it is not impossible that some Therans understood the stylized rosette to be a Christian cross, the symbol does not prove the Christianity of the monuments or the Christianity of the interred. It seems likely that in a period of religious transition, the cross-in-circle/rosette symbol could have held different meanings in different generations and possibly from one person to another. For example, the Therans could have at first inscribed the symbol as part of traditional funerary decoration and then later associated the rosette with Christian cross. In any case, the debate demonstrates that rosettes, symbols popular on gravestones both among pagans and Christians, cannot be used to prove Christianity or paganism of the Theran *angelos* epitaphs with certainty.

Epikto's Angel

H. Grégoire, J. and L. Robert, and other scholars who favor a Christian interpretation of the Theran stelai typically cite the epitaph of a certain "Epikto the Eldress" as evidence of the Christian character of the monuments.[27] These scholars argue that "Eldress" should be understood as a Christian ecclesiastical title. The epitaph of Epikto states as follows: Ἄνγε/λος Ἐπικτοῦς / πρεσβύ/τιδος, "Angel of Epikto the Eldress [πρεσβῦτις]."[28] Grégoire noted that the office of πρεσβῦτις is mentioned in the canons of Laodicaea (ca. 360), where it appears to mean "deaconess." This, together with the symbol that Grégoire understood to be a cross-monogram, led him to argue that the entire corpus of Theran angel epitaphs should be classified as Christian.[29] For Jeanne and Louis Robert and Dennis Feissel, the appearance of the title πρεσβῦτις was compelling evidence for the Christianity of the Theran

[26] For example at Ghirza in Tripolitania, see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 177–8, plates 64–65.

[27] Grégoire (1922) 57, no. 167; Grégoire (1930) 644; J. and L. Robert (1941) 254 n. 106; Feissel (1977) 212.

[28] Grégoire (1922) 58, no. 167 (= *IG* XII. 3. 933); Kiourtzian (2000) 263, no. 43, plate 59.

[29] Grégoire (1922) 58. The connection between Laodicaea and the Theran epitaphs was first made by Hans Achelis, "Spuren des Urchristentums auf den griechischen Inseln," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums* 1 (1900) 97. Πρεσβῦτις appears in Canon 11, which states, "Concerning this, let there be no so-called *eldresses* (πρεσβύτιδας), neither leaders, appointed in the Church." Greek text after C. J. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. 1 (Letouzey et Ané: Paris, 1907) 1003.

tombstones.[30] However, one should note that while the title πρεσβῦτις is suggestive of Christianity, it does not prove the case. Like *angelos,* the word πρεσβῦτις has both mundane and ecclesiastical meanings. While πρεσβῦτις can mean "Eldress" or "Deaconess," πρεσβῦτις can also mean simply "elder woman." Furthermore, the title appears on a Jewish epitaph from Rome, where it appears to designate a pious older woman, who (most likely) did not hold an ecclesiastical office.[31] Guarducci articulated the additional possibility that πρεσβῦτις was a title that distinguished an older Epikto from a younger Epikto in the same community.[32] Such a utilitarian interpretation of the epitaph is plausible due to the non-ecclesiastical meaning of πρεσβῦτις. Thus, one must conclude that while it is possible that Epikto held a minor Christian ecclesiastical office, it is not certain; and Epikto's epitaph certainly does not prove the Christianity of the Theran *angelos* grave stelai.

Heroes and Angels

Two longer *angelos* epitaphs contain "heroization" formulas (i.e. formulas that describe the dead as having been made heroes). Such formulas, clearly rooted in pagan religious sentiments, have figured in the debate over the religious identity of the Theran stelai, as discussed below. The present study suggests that while these epitaphs cannot settle the issue of religious identity, the heroization formulas offer clues for interpreting the word *angelos* on the grave stelai. The first epitaph, published over a century ago reads: ἄνγελος/ Ζωσίμου / ἀφηρόϊσα / Ῥουφεῖνα / τὸν ἴ[δ]ιον υἱόν, "Angel of Zosimos. I, Roupheina, have heroized my own son."[33] D. Feissel published a second, similar epitaph in 1974,

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[30] J. and L. Robert (1941) 254 n. 106; Feissel (1977) 212.

[31] Kiourtzian (2000) 265, referring to *CIJ* I², no. 400. See David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe, Volume 2: The City of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 27–8, no. 24. Noy suggests that the word is used on the Jewish inscription as a description rather than as a title. Also, as Guarducci suggested, the title "Eldress," could have been a title of respect given to her by the community, but not necessarily a formal title of Christian ecclesiastical office, Guarducci (1974) 151.

[32] Guarducci (1974) 152; cf. Guarducci (1939) 83. Guarducci cites as a parallel the pagan epitaph *IG* XII, 3, 107, which employs *prebyteros* to mean "senior." But, see also Antonio Ferrua, "Gli Angeli di Tera" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (1947) 152, who argues that Guarducci's parallel is too rare to support such speculation.

[33] Grégoire (1922) 59, no. 172 (= *IG* XII. 3. 942); Kiourtzian (2000) 256, no. 20, no photo.

which reads: ἄνγελος Ἐβικτήσις Μέ(να)νδρος Ἐβικτήσιν ἀφυρώησε, "The Angel of Ebiktesis. Menandros has heroized Ebiktesis."[34] Until Feissel's publication of the epitaph above, the Zosimus epitaph was unique among the Theran *angelos* stelai. In fact, in the early twentieth century, Hiller suggested that the gravestone was re-used and that the two portions of the inscription, "angel of Zosimus" and "I, Roupheina have heroized my own son," should be considered separate epitaphs.[35] Although unstated, Hiller apparently made this suggestion because there are numerous, clearly pagan, grave stelai from Thera that contain heroization formulas, but in the early twentieth century this was the sole *angelos* epitaph that also contained a heroization formula.[36] This fact, and perhaps the religious incongruity between hero-cult and the perceived Christianity of the epitaphs, caused Hiller to suggest that the grave stele was re-used. Few scholars after Hiller accepted his suggestion,[37] and D. Feissel's publication of a second such epitaph delivered the coup de grâce to Hiller's idea. However, while the numerous pagan heroization formulas on Theran tombstones can no longer be taken as evidence of Hiller's suggestion, the frequency and popularity of heroization formulas is highly suggestive of what the Therans understood *angelos* to mean, as the two epitaphs above appear to equate angelic and heroic status.

The numerous "heroization" formulas exhibited on pagan gravestones from Thera, and the combination of one such formula with the *angelos* formula on the Zosimus epitaph, led M. Guarducci to argue that the *angelos* gravestones should be considered pagan.[38] Grégoire, on the other hand, suggested that the heroization formula was merely traditional, and thus we need not assume that Menandros and Roupheina believed that they had actually made heroes of the dead.[39] There is some substance to Grégoire's argument. For instance one can find early Christian epitaphs in which the tomb is called a heroön,

[34] Kiourtzian (2000) 266, no. 45, plate 60; Feissel, *BCH* 101 (1977) 209–12, figure 1 (*editio princeps*).
[35] Hiller, *IG* XII, 3, 942.
[36] For example, the thirty-nine such formulas at *IG* XII.3.893–932.
[37] Grégoire (1922) 59, rejected Hiller's proposal, attempting to resolve the apparent incongruity between the "Christian" angel formula and the heroization formulas by suggestion that "hero" was used in a banal sense, noting that in the early Christian period a *heroön* was used to mean "tomb."
[38] Guarducci (1974) 152–5.
[39] Grégoire (1922) 59.

and where the deceased is called a "hero."[40] It would appear then, that in late antiquity, the term "hero" had lost some of its classical force.[41] However, given the general brevity of the Theran epitaphs, the phrase "to heroize" should be considered carefully before attributing it to mere tradition.

While it was more common "to heroize" the dead in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, that does not mean the phrase was meaningless. For instance, when the term "hero" appears on Christian epitaphs, it describes the virtue of the person.[42] Thus, while Zosimus and Ebiktesis may have not become the local equivalents of Theseus the Athenian, the phrase to "heroize" was not without significance. On one level, to "heroize" did mean to "construct a tomb," as many a common grave was called a "heroön" in this period.[43] But on another level, the term "hero" continued to describe someone of a status between men and the gods. In other words, heroes occupied liminal space, as did *angeloi* and *daimones* in the religious cosmology of the period. In addition, the heroization formulas found on pagan (non-*angelos*) gravestones from Thera frequently display scenes of a banquet of the blessed, where the heroized dead are shown reclining in a pleasant afterlife.[44] On these pagan gravestones from Thera, a hero is one who is depicted enjoying a banquet in the afterlife, a "heroic banquet" as Guarducci as called this scene.[45] Thus, while the heroization formula was traditional, the choice to use it on otherwise spare epitaphs in which the only other term associated with the dead is *angelos* was not out of meaningless

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[40] For instance, the Melian catacomb inscription discussed below, pp. See also Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 206. Burkert states that in the Hellenistic period, the practice of heroizing the dead had become a common affair, in contrast to the classical period.

[41] Richmond Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1942), 97–100.

[42] Ibid., 99.

[43] Burkert (1985) 206.

[44] *IG* XII.3. 893, 905, and 906.

[45] "banchetta eroico," Guarducci (1974) 149–50. Guaducci reproduces a line drawing of one such stele (cited as *IG* XII, 3, 1630), which contains a heroization formula on a grave stelai depicting (in relief) a man, a woman, and two children reclining at a dining couch. A photo of the same stele appears in Kiourtzian (2000) plate LIII, where it is cited (erroneously) as *IG* XII, 3, 906. Similarly, although not discussed by Guarducci, *IG* XII, 3: 893, 905, and 906, (Line drawings of these at Hiller [1899] 179) each contain heroization formulas and depict a man and woman reclining on a couch beside a dining table.

habit, as Grégoire suggested.[46] Rather, epigraphic parallels from Thera suggest that Roupheina and Zosimus equated the term "hero" with *angelos* and considered the soul of the deceased to exist in a blessed state between mortal and divine.

The Date of the Epitaphs

While acknowledging a date range from the second through fourth centuries, Kiourtzian suggests a third-century date for the majority of the Theran *angelos* stelai.[47] Kiourtzian's dating of the stelai takes into consideration the most recent excavations from Thera, which have uncovered an *angelos* stele in a third-century context.[48] Kiourtzian acknowledges that the letter forms of the epitaphs and the artistic styles of the stelai conform to known typologies spanning from the late-second to early-fourth centuries, but he argues that most of stelai appear to date to the third century. Kiourtzian's consideration of such evidence stands in stark contrast to Grégoire, whose sole criterion for dating was the perceived Christianity of the epitaphs, and Guarducci, who also seems to have been influenced by her argument for the pagan nature of the stelai, as discussed below.

Grégoire suggested, nearly a century ago, that the majority of the Theran *angelos* grave stelai date to the fourth century.[49] Grégoire's criteria for such a date are not entirely clear. He stated only that such a date was compatible with the perceived Christianity of the epitaphs.[50] However, Grégoire's motive for dating the epitaphs to the fourth century is perfectly transparent. Such a date bolstered Grégoire's argument that the grave stelai were Christian. Nevertheless, to use the supposed Christian character of the monuments to date them to the fourth century, and then to use the fourth century date to state that the monuments are Christian is clearly circular reasoning. Grégoire's study appears not to use the letter forms of the epitaphs, or the styles of the grave stelai to determine a date for the monuments. Although letter forms and style are often imprecise indicators of date, in the case

[46] Grégoire (1922) 59.
[47] Kiourtzian (2000) 274.
[48] See Kiourtzian (2000) 247 n. 1 and 274 n. 64 for references.
[49] Grégoire (1922) 57. Grégoire does admit, however, that a few of the gravestones may date to the end of the third century.
[50] Grégoire (1922) 57.

of the Theran grave stelai both could be taken to suggest a date prior to the fourth century, as Guarducci and Kiourtzian have since indicated.[51] Therefore, Grégoire's proposal to date the majority of the monuments to the fourth century should be rejected.

Just as Grégoire posited a late date to support his case for the Christianity of the epitaphs, so Guarducci argued that most of the stelai dated to the second and third centuries, with one stele perhaps dating to the first century.[52] Such early dating lent support to Guarducci's argument, by increasing the likelihood that the stelai were pagan. While Guarducci's early dating of the epitaphs may seem extreme in hindsight, her methods were an improvement over Grégoire's. For example, Guarducci examined the styles of the Theran grave stelai and noted parallels from the Roman imperial era.[53] So, while Guarducci's early dating of the monuments supports her argument, by making it more likely that the stelai were pagan, her case is at least based on a comparison of stylistic parallels rather than a priori assumptions. Kiourtzian's admission that some of the stelai may date as early as the second century is in part due to the similarities in style between Imperial grave markers and the Theran monuments to which Guarducci first brought attention.[54]

Theran Grave Angels in Later Roman Context

While the religious identity of the *angelos* stelai is uncertain, one can determine the meaning of *angelos* on the stelai because similar ideas about angelic beings existed in later Roman paganism, Christianity, Judaism, and Gnosticism. The majority of the angel epitaphs contain only the word *angelos* in the nominative and the name of the deceased in the genitive. Those in antiquity who read the epitaph affirmed the presence of the *angelos* and joined the *angelos* with the deceased.[55]

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[51] Guarducci (1974) 147; Kioutzian (2000) 274.
[52] Guarducci (1974) 147.
[53] Guarducci (1974) 174.
[54] Kiourtzian (2000) 274.
[55] The present study assumes that the epitaphs were intended to be read by passers-by, which in most cases would mean that the epitaphs were read aloud. By reading the epitaphs, the passers-by would affirm the statements of the epitaph. For the performative nature of Greek epitaphs see Joseph Day, "Towards a Pragmatics of Archaic and Paleochristian Greek Inscriptions," in *Nova Doctrina Vetusque*, edd. D. Kries and C. Brown Tkacz (New York, 1999) 249–51, who applies J. L. Austin's theories of performative speech-acts to early Christian inscriptions.

The assertion of the *angelos*' existence and the declaration of the link between a single *angelos* and a single individual appear to be the single greatest reason for the epitaph. As is argued below, such an association of a single *angelos* with a single individual corresponds to later Roman belief in guardian *angeloi* and tutelary spirits;[56] thus, we should understand the stelai as evidence for the existence of such beliefs on late-antique Thera.

Similar beliefs in tutelary spirits can be found in late-antique paganism, Christianity, and Judaism. Indeed, the belief in an invisible guardian assigned to an individual is better described as a feature of late antique religions generally, rather than a feature of a single religious tradition. Peter Brown, remarking on Plutarch's discussion of popular beliefs about the soul, sums up best the widespread nature of this belief:

> Thus, the self is a hierarchy, and its peak lies directly beneath the divine. At that peak late-antique men placed an invisible protector. Whether this protector was presented as the personal daimon, the genius, or the guardian angel, its function was the same: it was an invisible being entrusted with the care of the individual, in a manner so intimate that it was not only the constant companion of the individual; it was almost an upward extension of the individual. For the individual had been entrusted to it at birth, and continued under its protection after death.[57]

Brown's summary draws specifically from middle Platonic speculation on the relationship between the soul and the tutelary spirit, but, as Brown states above, early Christian writers express a similar concept, using a Christian vocabulary.

The Christian concept of the guardian angel appears as early as the New Testament. One famous passage is Jesus' statement in the *Gospel of Matthew*, "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones [referring to children]; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my father in heaven."[58] Jesus' statement appears to mean that each child has associated with them a personal, intercessory angel. The author of *Matthew* does not state whether or not the child would lose his or her guardian angel when they got older. However, the author of *Acts* implies that the guardian angel stayed with the believer into adulthood in his account of Peter's escape from prison.

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[56] The personal daimon and genius, for instance.
[57] P. Brown, *Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 51.
[58] Matt. 18:10, NRSV.

According to *Acts* 12, Peter escaped imprisonment with the help of angels, after which he proceeded to the house of Mary, the mother of John. When Peter knocked at the door, Rhoda, a servant, went to answer and upon seeing Peter shouted out to the praying disciples that Peter was at the door. The disciples responded to Rhoda, saying "You are out of your mind…It is his angel."[59] The disciples eventually admitted Peter to the house and were convinced of his corporeality. According to the narrative, it is unclear whether "angel" should mean Peter's angelic guardian or the soul of Peter. Perhaps the ambiguity is precisely the point. The guardian angel could be understood as the upward manifestation of the individual, to the point that the identity of the soul and the guardian angel merged, and where, in the case of Peter, the individual's angel could be mistaken for the individual.

Nearer in date to the Theran *angelos* epitaphs is a story told of St. Anthony, which also describes a guardian angel that takes on the appearance of the human it protects. According to the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, after retreating to the desert, Anthony was beset by sinful thoughts and listlessness. After asking God to save him from this affliction, Anthony saw

> a man like himself sitting at his work, getting up from his work to pray, then sitting down and plaiting a rope, then getting up again to pray. It was the angel of the Lord sent to correct and reassure him. He heard the angel saying to him "Do this and you will be saved."[60]

Although the text does not state that this angel was uniquely Anthony's, such is implied by the angel's physical similarity to Anthony and the angel's mission to correct and reassure Anthony.

One of the most famous Christian statements about guardian angels dates to the third century. Gregory Thaumaturgus, in a passage from his speech in praise of Origen, explained that he had an angel that sought to guide his efforts towards good and that this angel had brought him to be instructed by Origen.[61] In the same passage, Gregory also claimed that Origen had a guardian angel and that Origen was of such an elevated spiritual status that he suspected Origen had Christ

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[59] Acts 12:15, NSRV. See Acts 12:3–17 for the entire narrative.

[60] *Apophthegmata Patrum, Alphabetical Collection*: Anthony, 1. Trans., Benedicta Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Press, 1975).

[61] Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyrica in Origenem*, 4.40–46. Critical ed., H. Crouzel, ed., *Grégoire le Thaumaturge. Remerciement à Origène suivi de la lettre d'Origène à Grégoire. SC* 148. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969) 94–182.

"the angel of the Great Counsel" as his own guardian angel.[62] Origen's spiritual status would appear to have earned him a guardian angel of an appropriately higher status.

The belief that men had tutelary *angeloi* appropriate to their spiritual standing was not uniquely Christian. The third-century pagan Neo-Platonist Porphyry claimed that while *daimones* guide ordinary men, a god (rather than a *daimon*) guided his teacher Plotinus.[63] This is presumably because Plotinus had achieved daimonic status in his own lifetime, and thus the next higher order of spiritual being would guide him.[64] Porphyry calls the tutelary spirit a *daimon* rather than an *angelos*, but in other respects his claim of a great tutelary spirit for his teacher Plotinus directly parallels Gregory's claim that the "angel of the Great counsel" guided Origen. The similarity between these two statements appears even greater when one notes that philosophers in later antiquity equated the terms *angelos* and *daimon* as descriptive of intermediaries between the human and divine realms.[65]

The belief in guardian *angeloi* was not restricted to theologians and philosophers. Ammianus Marcelinus, writing in the late-fourth century, stated that Constantine's son, the emperor Constantius, believed that he could see his guardian angel from time to time.[66] According to Ammianus, Constantius became particularly alarmed when he could no longer see his guardian angel, fearing that his life was in danger. In fact the emperor's end was near. According to Ammianus, after sensing the departure of his guardian angel, Constantius became ill, dying shortly afterward while preparing to march against Julian, the emperor to be.[67] It is worth noting here that the pagan Ammianus, in order to explain the Christian Constantius's guardian angel, equated

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[62] Ibid., 4.42.

[63] Greek: *theos*. Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, 10. Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer, eds. *Plotini opera I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) 14–5.

[64] Plotinus's statements on this matter appear at *Enneads* 3.3.

[65] Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 9.19, referring to Platonists in general and Labeo in particular. Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.2 (M. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse. SC* 150 [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969]) where Origen responds to Celsus' statement that when the Christians speak of "angels," they are in fact referring to *daemons*, see above, Chapter 1, pp. 29–31. See also Macarius Magnes, *Monogenes* 4.21, who relates a Platonic equation of angels and gods; for critical text, see Richard Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie: Le Monogénès,* Vol II. (Paris: J. Vrin, 2003) 310–2. Similarly, Athenagoras, *Leg.* 6.2, equates Platonic and Christian monotheism.

[66] Amm. Marc. *Hist*., 21.14; for critical edition, see *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Vol. 2. W. Seyfarth, ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978) 242–4.

[67] Ibid., 21.15.

the emperor's angelic guardian with the tutelary spirits belonging to famous men of pagan antiquity, in particular Socrates, Numa Pompilius, the elder Scipio, Marius, Augustus, and Plotinus.[68] Thus, like the pagan philosophers of his era, Ammianus too was ready to equate the Christian guardian *angelos* with the pagan *daimon* and *genius*.

To return to the Theran stelai, most of the epitaphs explicitly join an individual with a particular angel. Thus the epitaphs represent a local manifestation of the belief in the guardian *angelos*, a belief that is better known from literary sources originating in the metropolitan centers of the empire, such as in the instances discussed above. The epitaphs therefore reveal that learned elites of the late empire, such as Porphyry and Gregory Thaumaturgus, for example, held some religious beliefs in common with the more peripheral residents of the empire. This evidence for the popularity of the belief in guardian *angeloi* stands in contrast to the assumption of some scholars, which holds that provincials were practicing a degenerate form of Homeric religion while learned elites speculated about a high-God and his mediators.[69]

Purposes of Inscribing Angelos *on Tombs*

While most of the Theran epitaphs are explicit in joining an *angelos* to a particular man or woman, they do not state why it was necessary to communicate this link through public display. Likewise, all of the Theran *angelos* epitaphs can be understood as statements maintaining the existence of an angelic being, but the epitaphs do not explain why it was necessary to communicate the existence of an *angelos*. Speculation found in religious and philosophical literature concerning the functions of *angeloi* suggests three possible answers to these questions. One, the word *angelos* describes the state of the deceased's soul, and thus reading the epitaph confirms the angelic state of the deceased. Two, the Therans believed the guardian *angelos* to be an escort for the soul; therefore invoking the *angelos* assisted the deceased on his or her journey to the afterlife. Three, the Therans believed that the

[68] Ibid., 21.14.

[69] See Brown (1981) 13–22 for a summary of the debate over "high" and "low" religion. As Brown rightly points out, ancient sources do not make such a distinction; therefore, modern studies that follow such a "two-tiered" model for ancient religion artificially segregate the religious practices and beliefs shared both members of different socio-economic classes.

angelos was present at the grave, and the epitaph was thus a warning against those who would violate the tomb. Literary and inscriptional comparanda indicate that all of these interpretations are possible. Furthermore, contrary to the opinions of previous scholars, these explanations are mutually reconcilable.

Announcing Souls and Psychopomps

The belief that the deceased became an angel at death appears in *Acts* 12, in the story of Peter's escape from prison, cited above. Henri Leclercq discussed the possibility that the word *angelos* on the Theran grave stelai should be understood as the soul of the dead.[70] However Leclercq ultimately rejected the idea because of a single example of a shared tombstone on which the word *angelos* appears once, combined with the names of two women.[71] Phane Drossoyianni has recently suggested that in this case the word *angelos* was inscribed only once for practical reasons, and that the reader should understand a single angel for each of the deceased.[72] As there is only one instance of such a shared tombstone, Drossoyianni's suggestion appears quite plausible. Thus, one could understand *angelos* as describing the status of the individual soul. The act of inscribing and reading the epitaph would thus commemorate the blessed state of the interred.

Numerous sources speak of the belief that the soul required an angelic escort in order to gain access to a pleasant afterlife. As discussed below, many Gnostic sources speak of angelic escorts in the afterlife, which is one of the reasons that Kiourtzian suggested that the composers of the Theran epitaphs be considered as Gnosticizing pagans.[73] However, similar ideas can be found in Christianity, Judaism, and late-antique paganism. Thus, as is argued below, whether Theran stelai are considered pagan, Jewish, Christian, or Gnostic, the action of reading the Theran angelos epitaphs may be understood as an invocation of the angelos that would assist the dead in reaching a blessed afterlife.

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[70] H. Leclercq "Anges," *DACL* (1924) t. 1, pt. 2, cols. 2142–4.
[71] Ibid., see also n. 10.
[72] P. Drossoyianni, "Review of G. Kiourtzian, *Recuil des inscriptions*," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 95 (2002) 691–2.
[73] Kiourtzian (2000) 278–82.

In classical Greco-Roman religion, Hermes, the *angelos* of the Olympian gods, was traditionally regarded, among other things, as the psychopomp who escorted the souls of the dead to the underworld.[74] While Hermes never lost this role in a traditional sense, in the later Roman period philosophers speculated on the roles of *daimones* in escorting the soul.[75] In addition, passages from the New Testament, Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, and early Christian theologians make it clear that angels were commonly believed to escort the dead in early Judaism and Christianity, as discussed below. This study argues that the appearance, in a variety of religious sources, of the belief that tutelary spirits and guardian angels played a key role in guaranteeing safe passage to a joyful afterlife makes it likely that the *angelos* of the Theran epitaphs was conceived of as a psychopomp.

A late Roman representation of a pagan angelic psychopomp comes from the Sabazian *hypogeum* attached to the Christian catacomb of Praetestato at Rome discussed in Chapter 1. The *hypogeum* is decorated with several scenes depicting the afterlife of Vincentius, a priest of Sabazius, and a woman named Vibia (presumably his wife).[76] Although the epitaph speaks of Vincentius explicitly, most of the tomb paintings represent the death of Vibia, and her journey to a blessed afterlife. Two paintings depict Vibia as escorted into the underworld and then unto judgment by a god labeled as "Mercurius Nuntius," who appears complete with winged helmet and caduceus. Another painting intended to show events subsequent to the judgment depicts Vibia escorted to the Banquet of the Just by a man labeled *Angelus Bonus*, the "Good Angel." Thus, the tomb of Vincentius illustrates the role of beings such as Mercurius Nuntius and the *Angelus Bonus* played in escorting the soul unto judgment and to a blessed afterlife.[77]

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[74] Burkert (1985) 157–8.

[75] For example, Plotinus, *Enn*. 3.4.6; Apuleius, *DeDeoSoc*. 154–5.

[76] E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman World: The Archaeological Evidence from the Diaspora.* Volume 2 (New York: Bolingen, 1953) 45–50. Figures 839–44, contains a complete discussion of the representations, with drawings of the tomb and paintings. Prior to Goodenough, the tomb was considered to illustrate Hellenized Judaism, an assertion Goodenough shows to be questionable as the tomb has clear associations with the cult of Sabazius but none with any form of Judaism.

[77] Goodenough (1953) 49, notes that the word *angelus* [sic] is rare on pagan inscriptions, but Hermes is termed the "Angel of Persephone" in *EG* 575.

Middle-Platonic philosophers did a great deal to elucidate the roles of the *daimones* spoken of in the Platonic corpus. Two works in particular deserve special mention and offer insight into the beliefs about tutelary spirits current in intellectual circles at the time of the Theran *angelos* epitaphs: Apuleius's and Plutarch's commentaries on the *daimon* of Socrates. Apuleius's *De Deo Socratis* offers, as J. Dillon stated, "the most complete connected version of middle platonic daemonology extant."[78] As Dillon notes, Apuleius has three categories of *daimones*: 1) the human soul itself, 2) souls which have left their bodies, 3) *daimones* who never enter bodies.[79] The tutelary *daimon* belongs in this last category. Apuleius states that the tutelary *daimon* is of a higher and more august type, assigned to individual humans as witnesses and guardians in the conduct of their lives.[80] When life is done, this daemon drags us off to trial, and acts as a witness.[81] The role of the tutelary *daimon* as described by Apuleius sounds very much like the roles of Mercury and the *Angelus Bonus* depicted on the tomb of Vincentius, where Mercurius Nuntius brings Vibia to trial and the *Angelus Bonus* brings Vibia to a feast of the just.

Plutarch posits a similar role for *daimones*. He states that while the gods themselves guide some men, the rest of us are guided by *daimones*, who, as disembodied souls, help others to reach the afterworld.[82] These *daimones* (souls) do not help everyone, however. Using the allegory of swimmers in a channel, Plutarch states that these *daimones* only help those who are able to swim near to the shore. In addition, only those who heed the *daimones* will make it to shore, and each soul is helped by only one *daimon*.[83] Although both Plutarch and Apuleius termed the psychopompic intermediaries *daimones*, it is clear from comments made by Celsus in his attack on Christianity, that such intermediaries could be described as *angeloi* as well.[84]

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[78] J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) 320.

[79] Dillon (1996) 319.

[80] Apuleius, *DeDeoSocr*, 154–5. J. Beaujeu, ed. and trans. *Apulée: opuscules philosophiques et fragments* (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1973), 35–6.

[81] *DeDeoSocr*, 154–5.

[82] Plutarch, *De Genio Socratis*, 593. Critical edition in Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarson, eds. *Plutarch's Moralia* Vol. VII. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959) 478–82.

[83] *De Genio Socratis*, 593. See also Dillon (1996) 219–21.

[84] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.2. M. Borret, Vol. 3, *SC* 147 (1969) 16–8. See also Augustine, *CivDei* 9.19.

In Christian and Jewish tradition, the most detailed scriptural descriptions of guardian angels as escorts of the soul appear in pseudepigraphical and apocryphal texts.[85] However, an example also appears in the *Gospel of Luke* where angels are said to escort Lazarus into paradise.[86] References to *angeloi* as escorts of the soul may be found in the Christian church fathers as well. John Chrysostom stated that the soul required angels as escorts to reach heaven,[87] and Gregory of Nyssa stated that his sister Macrina prayed as she neared death for an angel of light to lead her and prevent the envious one from standing in her way.[88] Peter Brown has noted that Tertullian believed that the bond between the guardian angel and individual would survive death and that upon death the individual would awake in the other world "looking into the clear face of his angel."[89] Concern for an angelic escort to the afterlife may even be the reason that an amulet inscribed with the names of Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel was buried with the Empress Maria (d. 407), wife of the emperor Honorius.[90]

Angelic escorts for the souls of the dead are also a feature of Gnostic literature. However, this need not indicate that the Theran angel grave stelai belonged to a Gnostic or Gnosticizing religious sect, as G. Kiourtzian has suggested. Kiourtzian ventured the suggestion that the word *angelo*s might designate an "homme éclairé," a soul that is awaiting its ascension, and that the word could also serve as a "key" that would allow the initiate to obtain passage to the blessed afterworld from an angel.[91] Kiourtzian notes the importance of angels among certain Gnostic sects for gaining access to the upper levels of heaven, and he suggests that the word *angelos* may represent such an

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[85] E.g. *Testament of Asher* 6.6; *Life of Adam and Eve* (Latin *Vita* 47–48/ Greek *Apoc*. 37). See also B. Caseau, "Crossing the Impenetrable Frontier Between Heaven and Earth," in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Matthisen and H.S. Sivan (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996) 333–43 for numerous references to this belief between the second century BCE and eighth century CE.

[86] Luke 16:22, according to which, the angels carry the beggar Lazarus to the bosum of Abraham, where he receives comfort after a life of misery. According to the well-known story, the rich man, for whom no angelic escort is mentioned, suffers in Hades.

[87] 2nd Homily on Lazarus, *PG* 48.948.

[88] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Macrinae* 984B. See also Brown (1981) 67.

[89] Brown (1981) 66, in reference to Tertullian, *De Anima* 53.6.

[90] Caseau (1996) 337.

[91] Kiourtzian (2000) 281.

angelic escort.[92] As Kiourtzian indicated in his study of the Theran epitaphs, early Christian heresiologists attributed to heretical and Gnostic groups, an inappropriate regard for angelic beings.[93] Gnostic documents discovered in the last century confirm that Gnostic groups did emphasize the significnce of *angeloi*, and Gnostic texts describe the role of *angeloi* in guiding the soul to the afterlife.[94] However, as the evidence above demonstrates, the belief in a personal, guardian *angelos* was not limited to religious sects described as Gnostic, nor limited to heretical Christian groups. Rather, the belief in personal tutelary spirits, often termed *angeloi*, that served as escorts for the soul after death was common in early Christian sects, early Judaism, and later Roman paganism, as well as among Gnostic groups. The present chapter demonstrates that the existence of similar beliefs about angelic soul-escorts in several late-antique religious traditions resolves one of the difficulties encountered by scholars who attempted to classify the stelai by religion before interpreting the purpose of the epitaphs.[95] Regardless of what religious tradition the Therans who carved these stelai belonged to, the invocation of a guardian angel in a funerary context strongly suggests that the Therans conceived of the *angelos* as an escort for the soul to the afterlife.

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[92] Kiourtzian (2000) 278–82.

[93] Kiourtzian (2000) 278–82, notes specifically, Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus haereses*, 1.24.3–6, where the heresies of Saturninus and Basilides are described, critical ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irénée de Lyon, Contre les heresies*, L.1, T. 2. *SC* 264 (Paris: du Cerf, 1979) 324–331; for Latin text see also J. T. Nielson, *Irenaeus of Lyons Versus Contemporary Gnosticism: A Selection from Books I and II of Adversus Haereses* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 47–51. Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, *PG* 16. 3194–3203. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, *Anacephaelosis* 4.60 and 2.4.40 (PG 41. 1037–1040). English trans. F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, Books 2–3 (Leiden: Brill, 1987) 2, 113–4, where Epiphanius discusses a sect called the "Angelikoi." Epiphanius stated that he knew this sect by name, but had no knowledge of their practices or beliefs. Epiphanius suggested that they were so-named either because they worshiped angels, or because they believed themselves to have become angels, or because they believed that the angels created the world. Epiphanius also suggested that they were named after where they lived, noting that there was a place named "Angelina" on the other side of Mesopotamia. Epiphanius seems to suspect that the "Angelikoi" may no longer have existed in his own day.

[94] For example, the Gnostic *Apocalypse of Paul* (Nag Hammadi Codices: V, 2) 19–21, describes a soul brought to judgment by angels. For elaborate angelology see, *The Apocryphon of John* 10.20–19. Translations of both texts available in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 3d, ed., J. M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978).

[95] Phane Drossoyianni (2002) 692, states that the lack of a distinctive Christian symbol on the stelai is a problem for using Christian sources to interpret the epitaphs.

Angelic Tomb Guardians

H. Leclercq suggested that the Theran grave angels should be considered "guardians of the tomb."[96] Although there is nothing explicit in the epitaphs that warrants such an interpretation, several of the Theran epitaphs display the word *angelos* alone in the genitive case. Thus, these epitaphs read only "of the angel."[97] More suggestive still is the epitaph which reads simply ἄβατον ἀγγέλου,[98] which seems to mean "The inaccessible place of the *angelos*." Some difficulty with the text arises because the word ἀγγέλου is partially superimposed on the word ἄβατον, which could indicate that ἄβατον was part of an earlier epitaph and should not be read in connection with ἀγγέλου. However, a drawing of the inscription made by Hiller (the original stele is now lost) shows the letter forms of the two words to be very similar,[99] and thus the words would appear to date from the same period. Thus, if the stele was re-used, the re-use was shortly after the original inscription. Also, if the word ἀγγέλου was intended to efface and replace the word ἄβατον, the effacement was unsuccessful, leaving a grave stele that warns passers-by of the inaccessible place of an angel. If this reading is correct, as it seems to be, then the Theran epitaphs that contain only the word ἀγγέλου, would seem also to warn passers-by of the presence of an angelic being, protecting the deceased in death even as in life. In addition, funerary angel invocations from Melos, Eumenia, and Thessaly, which explicitly invoke an *angelos* as a tomb guardian make it possible to interpret the Theran grave angel as a tomb guardian as well.

Regardless of whether pagans, Christians, or a Gnostic group carved the Theran *angelos* epitaphs, the epitaphs assert the existence an *angelos* linked with the deceased. Based on contemporary religious and philosophical speculation on the relationship between the tutelary spirit and the individual, as well as the function of the guardian *angelos*, the Theran grave *angeloi* appear to be the guardians of the individuals

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[96] Leclercq (1924) 2144.

[97] See above, note 11.

[98] Kiourtizian (2000) no. 41. (= *IG*, XII, 3, 455.)

[99] Kiourtzian was unable to recover the original stele for his study, and opines that the two words are very similar on paleographic grounds (2000) 263, based on Hiller's sketch, which is reproduced (from *IG* XII, 3, 455) at plate LIX, no. 41. See also Grégoire (1922) 57–8, no. 166. Hiller's sketch also appears at Leclercq (1924) 2144, figure 667.

in life, the guardian of the tomb at death, and the escort of the soul unto the afterlife. If we follow Brown's reading of Plutarch, which suggests that the tutelary spirit was thought to be very nearly the upward extension of the individual, then it is also plausible that *angelos* on the Theran epitaphs also describes the individual deceased.

Angel of Roubes

An epitaph from Eumenia in Asia Minor also explicitly invokes an *angelos* to protect the grave, and serves as a revealing comparandum to the Theran epitaphs, as well as a valuable piece of evidence for third century beliefs about *angeloi* generally. A certain Lykidas is responsible for the inscription, and he states to the reader that he built the tomb for his two sisters. Lykidas stipulates that no one else, besides his two sisters, should be placed in the grave. In order to protect the grave from future violation, he invokes both God and the Angel of Roubes. The text is as follows:

> Αὐρ. [Ζ]ωτι[κ]ὸ[ς] / Λυκίδας μάρ/τυρα τὸν / θεὸν δίδω / ὅτι κατεσ/κεύασα τὸ ἡ/ρῷον, νω/θρῶς / ἔχον/τος Ἀμιανοῦ / τοῦ ἀδε<λ>φοῦ / μου, ἀπὸ τῶν / ἐμῶν καμάτων / καὶ ἐντέλλομε / Φρονίμη καὶ / Μά/ξιμαν τὰς ἀδελ/φάς μου τεθῆνε / μ<ού>νας. εἴ τις δὲ / ἕτερον θήσει, ἔσ/τε αὐτῷ πρὸς / τὸν θεὸν καὶ / τὸν ἄνγελον / τὸν Ῥουβῆ/δος[100]
>
> Aur[elius] [Z]oti[k]o[s] Lykidas, I present God as my witness, that I built this tomb from my own labor (my brother Amianus having been slothful) and I command that only my sisters Phronime and Maxima be placed [here]. If someone should bury another [here], let him [answer] to God and the Angel of Roubes.

Like the Theran epitaphs, Lykidas's inscription mentions the *angelos* of a particular person. However, in the case of Lykidas' invocation, the *angelos* invoked was not that of the interred. Rather, Lykidas invoked the *angelos* of someone who was assumed to be particularly holy and thus possess a particularly powerful *angelos*.

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[100] Text after L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11/12 (1960) 430, photos of squeezes on plates XXII–XXIII, photo of stone on plate XXVI 1(*editio princeps*). See also A. R. R. Sheppard (1979) 175–6; XXIb. Sheppard emends line 1 to read ἔτι ζῶντος. Thus: "The yet living Lykidas, I present God as my witness…" Both readings are possible, see Sheppard, p. 176, for discussion.

As L. Robert and A. R. R. Sheppard discussed in their respective commentaries on Lykidas' inscription, Roubes should be equated with the Hebrew name Reuben.[101] Thus, it is likely that Lykidas was invoking the guardian angel of a local Jewish man. L. Robert proposed that the Roubes in the Lykidas inscription should be identified with the Roubes mentioned in an epitaph of one Gaius, discovered approximately two kilometers from the find-spot of Lykidas' inscription.[102] Given the close physical proximity of the epitaphs' find-spots, such a conjecture seems most likely. The portion of Gaius' epitaph relevant to the present discussion states as follows:

> ζωὸς ἐὼν τοῦτον τύμβον τις ἔτευξεν ἑαυτῷ, /Μούσαις ἀσκηθείς, Γάϊος πραγματικός, /[ἠ]δ' ἀλόχῳ φιλίῃ Τατίῃτέκεσίν τε ποθητοῖς, /οἵ ῥα τὸν ἀίδιον τοῦτον ἕ[χ]ωσι δόμον, /σὺν Ῥουβῇ μεγάλοιο θ[εοῦ] θεράποντι[103]
>
> Gaius, an attorney, practiced in the arts, built this tomb while yet living, for himself, his beloved spouse Tatie and the longed-for children, who should then have this grave as their home, with Roubes, servant of the Great G[od]…[104]

Robert and Sheppard understood the epitaph to mean that Gaius had reserved a burial space for Roubes. As Robert observed, the Gaius inscription probably refers to the same Roubes mentioned on the Lykidas inscription.[105] Thus we should conclude that Roubes was something of a local holy man. Roubes, as a servant of God, was apparently believed to be sufficiently holy so as to possess an *angelos* that could be invoked to protect tombs near his tomb. Both Robert and Sheppard suggested that Roubes was, to quote Sheppard "of Jewish extraction."[106] Because the epitaph of Gaius mentions that "The Just show the way to Resurrection," Sheppard argued that Gaius and his family were most likely Christians, even though such sentiments could also be Jewish.[107]

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[101] L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11/12 (1960) 419; A. R. R. Sheppard (1979) 175–6.

[102] Robert (1960) 414–33.

[103] Text after Robert (1960) 415, ff. See also Sheppard (1979) 177, for complete Greek text, English translation, and commentary; and *SEG* VI.210.

[104] The selection above is preceded by Gaius's statement that the elements of his name are "equal in numerical value to the two words of awe." Gaius follows the selection above with statements affirming his own hard work and offering reflection on death as the great leveler, stating "let no one deluded in his wealth harbor proud thoughts, for there is one Hades and an equal end for all." Translations from Sheppard (1979) 178.

[105] Robert (1960) 415–30.

[106] Sheppard (1979) 176; Robert (1960) 419.

[107] Sheppard (1979) 179.

To make clear the hazards in such religious categories, it is worth noting that Gaius also stated in his epitaph that the dead would all be equal in Hades, sentiments which hardly seem Christian or Jewish.[108] But more to the point, the application of labels such as Jewish, Christian, or pagan to an epitaph like Gaius's, which shows a blend of religious ideas, does not aid in our understanding of the inscription. Clearly, we are looking at syncretistic funerary formulae. Even if we could state for certain that Gaius considered himself to be a Christian, what exactly that meant in early third-century Eumenia would still be an open question.

Similarly, the Lykidas inscription is clearly a product of later Roman religious syncretism, although Sheppard and Robert argued that Lykidas and his sisters were Christians on account of the "Eumenian Formula" employed on the Lykidas inscription. The so-called Eumenian formula consists of the curse ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θέον, which W. M. Calder argued was a discretely Christian curse formula.[109] However, the Eumenian Formula is not proof of Lykidas's Christianity. As Sheppard himself notes, while the Eumenian Formula is used in epitaphs whose Christianity is confirmed by the use of Christian symbols or Christian phrases, Calder's main argument is that none of the epitaphs that employ the Eumenian Formula are demonstrably pagan.[110] The use of the Eumenian Formula is very suggestive, but it does not prove that Lykidas and his family were Christians, as Sheppard suggests. Rather, what we have in the Lykidas inscription is a man (Lykidas) who is perhaps a Christian, calling upon the angel of a Roubes, who is likely Jewish, as a protector of the grave. Rather than categorize this epitaph as Christian or Jewish, it is perhaps more revealing to see it as evidence of later Roman religious syncretism. Clearly what mattered most to Lykidas was protecting the tomb against future violation and he judged an invocation of God and the Angel of Roubes to be the most effective means to that end.

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[108] "Let no one be deluded in his wealth harbor proud thoughts, for there is one Hades and an equal end for all." trans. Sheppard (1979) 178. However, as Sheppard notes, Christian epitaphs did continue to express traditional attitudes towards death. See Lattimore (1942) 327–32.

[109] W. H. Calder, "The Eumenian Formula," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to W. H. Buckler* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939) 15.

[110] Sheppard (1979) 170.

The association of angels with holy men is attested in the Jewish pseudepigrapha, as well as in the Christian New Testament.[111] Thus it is not surprising that Roubes, as a great servant of God, was believed to have a personal angel. The Lykidas and Gaius epitaphs are revealing of third century religion in provinces where those of various religious backgrounds lived, worked, and worshipped in close proximity. We see that Roubes, who is very likely Jewish, was regarded as a man of sufficient piety that his angel could be invoked by Lykidas, whose religious affiliation is unclear. Gaius, whose epitaph appears to blend traditional Greco-Roman and Jewish ideas of the afterlife, wished for his family to be buried with a servant of God, thus establishing a form of kinship between Roubes and his family, presumably to the benefit of Gaius in the hereafter.

The Catacomb Inscription from Melos

An epitaph from Melos, which warns would-be tomb violators of an *angelos*-guardian, comes from the Christian catacombs on the island. The text and the tomb are usually dated to the early fourth century.[112] This is the sole example of a funerary invocation of an *angelos* from the third or fourth century that can be described as Christian with certainty. The text is as follows:

ἐν Κ(υρί)ῳ.
οἱ πρεσβοίτεροι οἱ πάσης μνήμης ἄξιοι Ἀσκλῆπις
καὶ Ἐλπίζων κὲ Ἀσκληπι[όδο]τ[ο]ς κὲ Ἀγαλ<λ>ίασις
[δ]ιάκονος καὶ Εὐτυχία παρθενεύσασα κὲ Κλαυδιανὴ
παρθενεύσασα καὶ Εὐτυχία ἡ τούτων μήτηρ
ἔνθα κεῖντε· καὶ ἐπὶ γέμι τὸ θηκίον τοῦτο,
ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν ὧδε ἐφεστῶτα ἄνγελον,
μή τίς ποτε τολμή<ση> ἐνθάδε τινὰ καταθέσθε.
Ἰησοῦ Χρειστὲ βοήθει τῷ γράψαντι πανοικί[113]

In the Lord
The elders worthy of the entire tomb, Asklepes
and Elpizon and Asklepiodotos and Agaliasis

[111] For example *Acts* 12, Peter's angel; according to *1Enoch* 19; 21, Enoch is guided by Uriel through the heavens; in *Tobit* 3:16–5:14, Raphael accompanies the honorable Tobit and defeats the demon Azmodeus for him.

[112] Grégoire (1922) 62–3, no. 209; Kiourtzian (2000) 87–8, no. 24. = *IG* 13.3.1238.

[113] Text after *IG* 12. 3.1238. See also Kiourtzian (2000) 88.

deaconess and Eutuchia having led a virginal life and Klaudiana
having led a virginal life and Eutuchia, their mother
rest here, and upon this full grave
I adjure you by the very angel standing by
lest you dare place anyone else inside
Jesus Christ aid the writer and his entire family

The variant of the *Christe Boethei* prayer confirms the Christianity of the inscription. The Melian epitaph explicitly invokes an *angelos* of the grave in order to protect the tomb from violation. In this regard the Melian epitaph follows in a long tradition of Greek (and Roman) epitaphs that invoke deities to protect the tomb,[114] and this is how we should understand the Melian epitaph, as a traditional Greco-Roman form of epitaph, adapted for the Christian religion.

The Melian invocation does not establish any explicit relationship between the interred and the *angelos* watching over them. The *angelos* is merely stated to be at the tomb. The belief that angels dwelled at the tomb appears in the gospel narratives of the visit of the women to the tomb of Jesus.[115] In the various versions of the story, angelic beings are discovered lingering around the tomb of Christ. The gospel stories most likely reflect a belief concerning *angeloi* and tombs current in Hellenistic and Roman-era Palestine, perhaps one shared by other Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. Thus, while the invocation of a deity to protect the tomb has its origins in traditional Greek religion, the belief that *angeloi* resided near tombs and protected them against violation appears to be a blend of traditional Greek and other eastern Mediterranean religious traditions.

Conclusion

The funerary *angelos* inscriptions examined in this chapter reveal that in late antiquity the belief in guardian *angeloi* existed outside of the

[114] Such Late-antique pagan epitaphs as invoke deities as protectors, often invoke chthonic intermediaries or do not name a particular deity as a protector of the tomb, stating only that the violator will answer to the divinity. See for examples, J. H. M. Strubbe, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christoher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 37–47.

[115] Matt. 28:2–7 (great earthquake and single angel descending from heaven at the tomb); Mark 16:5–6 (young man in white inside the tomb); Luke 24:4–7 (two men in brilliant clothes inside the tomb); John 20:11–13 (two men inside the tomb, explicitly called angels).

learned, literary elite, whose beliefs concerning tutelary spirits are recorded on the page. It was not only theologians like Origen, philosophers like Plotinus, or even ascetics like Anthony who were believed to possess a guardian spirit, but also local holy men, like Roubes of Eumenia. The Theran epitaphs demonstrate how democratic the belief in guardian angels could be, as the large number and variety in quality of Theran *angelos* epitaphs suggest that the possession of a guardian *angelos* was not restricted to a few holy men, or even the wealthy of the community.

Literary evidence and funerary inscriptions from Melos, Eumenia, Thera, and Rome suggest several reasons why the word *angelos* would be inscribed on grave stelai and used in funerary epigrams. Significantly, these reasons are not always mutually exclusive. The *angelos* could be invoked as a protector of the grave, as at Melos, Eumenia, and (possibly) Thera. Literary sources describe, and the fresco from the Sabazean Hypogeum illustrates, how *angeloi* were believed to serve as escorts for the soul to the afterlife, a belief that may also be reflected in the Theran epitaphs. In addition, *Acts* 12's reference to the *angelos* of Peter and the "Angel of Roubes" inscriptions from Eumenia indicate that *angelos* sometimes referred to the individual deceased after death. Similarly, it is possible that the Theran epitaphs use *angelos* to describe the state of the deceased. However, such use would not exclude the possibility that the Theran epitaphs were also intended to warn would-be tomb violators about an angelic guardian. Such inscriptions and related literary sources reveal some of the later Roman beliefs about beings called *angeloi* and their relationship with the grave and the afterlife—beliefs expressed through a Greek word and its Latin transliteration, which allowed local and distinct religious traditions to express similar concepts in a universal language.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANGELS OF THE SPRING: VARIATIONS ON LOCAL *ANGELOS* VENERATION AND CHRISTIAN REACTION

Literary accounts and archaeological evidence make it clear that the inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean believed that gods and spirits were associated more strongly with some places than others. These sites made up the sacred geography of the later Roman world: the points of contact where heaven and earth (or earth and the infernal realm) were most likely to meet. Although scholars often classify such sites by religious tradition, this chapter examines holy sites that cannot be so easily classified. The sacred sites examined in this chapter all contain springs or natural wells, and all of them are associated with *angeloi*. The chapter focuses on Mamre in Judea and the Fountain of the Lamps at Corinth, and compares those sites with the Bethesda Pool, the Fountain of Anna Perenna, and Chonae, each of which is associated with *angeloi*. Ancient evidence suggests that those of divergent religious traditions came to pray and leave offerings side-by-side at these sites, in the shared belief in their sacred character and association with *angeloi*.

The chapter examines the manner in which the term *angeloi* could serve as an occasional explanation for the numinous beings associated with the sites, the reasons that the term *angeloi* could have meaning for the divergent religious groups that appear to have venerated these sites, and the process by which Christian authorities attempted to establish authority over some foci of *angeloi* veneration and invocation. Although *angeloi* could have a distinct significance for members of divergent religious traditions, this chapter argues that a shared Hellenic culture among Christians, Jews, and followers of local religious traditions allowed for a shared understanding of the ritual power of sites associated with *angeloi.* The chapter suggests that prior to the fourth century many of the participants in rituals at these sites may not have thought much about worshipping alongside those of different religious traditions, because they believed that the presence of those belonging to different religious traditions could not impugn the ritual power of the site. However, by the fourth century and afterwards, Christian authorities and some Christian worshippers, as well as some

rabbinical authorities, did not share such an inclusive attitude. Rather, the Christian empire and the Church viewed such inclusiveness as a threat to its authority over sacred sites.

Mamre

At early-fourth century Mamre in southern Judea, pagans, Jews, and Christians worshipped along side each other because of a shared belief that angels appeared to Abraham at that site. Constantine's mother-in-law, Eutropia, on pilgrimage to the Holy Land (ca. 323), witnessed the religious practices at this shared religious site and found the rituals so shocking and idolatrous that she reported them to the emperor.[1] Three historians—Eusebius, Socrates, and Sozomen—record that after Constantine learned of these rites, he sternly rebuked the bishops of Palestine for allowing idolatrous practices at a site sacred to Christianity and ordered a Christian house of worship to be constructed at the site. Eusebius offers the earliest account in his *Life of Constantine* (ca. 339), but it contains only a limited description of what Eutropia saw at Mamre. The second historian to treat the subject was Socrates Scholasticus, who, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (439–43)[2] offers an even more abbreviated summary of events than Eusebius's earlier statement.

Sozomen, the third historian to write about Eutropia's trip to Mamre, provides a more thorough description of what Eutropia saw there. According to Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* (composed 439–50),[3] Eutropia witnessed Jews, Christians, and others worshipping side-by-side. Sozomen records that Jews considered the site sacred because of the angelic epiphany to Abraham, Christians worshipped there because they believed one of the angels was the pre-incarnate Christ, and *Hellenes* (i.e. non-Christians and non-Jews) came to call upon the *angeloi*, while offering lamps and incense at the well of Mamre. Furthermore, Sozomen states that these same groups came together at Mamre even in his own day, approximately one hundred years after Eutropia's visit. The present chapter will focus on Sozomen's

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[1] *PLRE* I (1979), "Eutropia 1," p. 316.

[2] On the dating of Socrates' work, see T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997) 19–20.

[3] Although Socrates' and Sozomen's histories date from roughly the same period, Sozomen is generally acknowledged to have used Socrates' work and thus is considered to be slightly later. See Urbainczyk (1997) 19–20.

account of Mamre because he was an eye-witness to rituals at the site and because his history reveals aspects of a shared sacred geography among pagans, Christians, and Jews and the manner in which Christian authority sought to control such sites of ritual power. However, I will first examine Eusebius' and Socrates' descriptions of Mamre, which reveal some of the reasons that Christians began to visit Mamre and worship beside pagans and Jews.[4]

Eusebius of Caesarea explains that Constantine, and presumably Eutropia, believed that the pre-incarnate *Logos* had appeared at Mamre.[5] Eusebius provides a copy of Constantine's letter to Macarius of Jerusalem, which orders the construction of a Christian edifice at the site.[6] The belief that one of the men who appeared to Abraham was the pre-incarnate Christ appears to be particularly dear to Eusebius, as P. W. L. Walker has noted,[7] and one might conjecture that Eusebius was among those who conveyed the significance of the site to Constantine and his family. Eusebius' understanding of the angelic epiphany as a theophanyis based upon the narrative in *Genesis* 18:1–21, which records the tradition of the angelic epiphany at Mamre. According to *Genesis* 18:2, three men[8] from God appeared to Abraham at Mamre, where the patriarch had made his camp outside of Sodom. These men came to announce to Abraham the subsequent pregnancy of Sarah and birth of Abraham's son, Isaac, and to warn Abraham of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Although *Genesis* 18 does not use the term *angelos* to describe the three men, a later tradition understood that the men were angels, and *Genesis* 19, which describes two of the men (presumably the same ones) as *angeloi* appears to support this interpretation.[9] A subsequent Christian interpretation of the visitation, which Eusebius advocated, held that one of the angels was the pre-incarnate

[4] Although this chapter focuses on the reaction of Christian authorities to the practices at Mamre, there is also evidence that Jewish authorities discouraged participation in the rituals and festival at Mamre. See, H. Sivan, *Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 31, 184–5 and D. Boyarin, *Border Lines* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 14–5; both base their comments on a rabbinic prohibition found in *Palestinian Talmud, AZ* 1.5 (39d).

[5] Eusebius *VC* 3.51–3. Greek text: see F. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke, Bande 1: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975).

[6] Ibid.

[7] P. W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 276, n. 141. See Eusebius, *HE* 1.2.6–8, *Dem. Ev.* 5.9.

[8] LXX: treıs êndrew.

[9] *Gen.* 19:2 LXX (18:2 M): δύο ἄγγελοι

Logos.[10] This interpretation appears to be based upon *Genesis* 18's use of "the Lord" when describing the speech of one of the men.[11] In any case, the understanding of the account as describing a pre-incarnate Christ at Mamre made the site especially sacred to Christians. Whatever the source of Constantine's belief that Christ appeared at Mamre, the emperor firmly expressed his conviction in a letter to Macarius and the other bishops of Palestine, composed ca. 325 and quoted by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*. According to Eusebius, Constantine stated as follows:

> The place by the oak which is known as Mamre, where we understand that Abraham made his home, has been completely defiled [Eutropia] says, by superstitious persons. Idols fit only for absolute destruction have been set up beside it, she explains, and an altar stands nearby, and foul sacrifices are constantly conducted there.[12]

Following this statement, Constantine explained that he has ordered the *comes* Acacius to burn whatever idols he finds at Mamre, to demolish the altar, to clear the whole area, and to construct a suitable basilica at the site. Constantine further ordered the bishops "to take particular care that in the future none of those accursed and foul people come near the place."[13]

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[10] Eusebius, *VC* 3.51–3; see note 6 above. Sozomen, *HE* 2.4 relates the same interpretation of the epiphany at Mamre; see below. Justin Martyr indicates a similar view at *Dial. cum Tryph*. 56.1, stating: Μωυσῆς οὖν, ὁ μακάριος καὶ πιστὸς θεράπων θεοῦ, μηνύων ὅτι <θεός ἐστιν> ὁ ὀφθεὶς τῷ Ἀβραὰμ πρὸς τῇ δρυῒ τῇ Μαμβρῇ [θεὸς] σὺν τοῖς ἅμα αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τὴν Σοδόμων κρίσιν πεμφθεῖσι δύο ἀγγέλοις ὑπὸ ἑλλου, τοῦ ἐν τοῖς ὑπερουρανίοις ἀεὶ μένοντος καὶ οὐδενὶ ὀφθέντος ἢ ὁμιλήσαντος δι' ἑαυτοῦ ποτε, ὃν ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων καὶ πατέρα νοοῦμεν, οὕτω [γάρ] φησιν· Greek text from *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone,* Ed. by Miroslav Marcovich (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997) 161. Justin, however, does not state that one of the angels is the pre-incarnate Logos, only that one of the men was God.

[11] For the importance of Mamre in Eusebius' theology, see Walker 1(1990) 276, n. 141.

[12] VC 3.53.1. Translation adapted from Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, Eusebius: Life of Constantine (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) 141–3. τὸ χωρίον, ὅπερ παρὰ τὴν δρῦν τὴν Μαμβρῆ προσαγορεύεται, ἐν ᾧ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ τὴν ἑστίαν ἐσχηκέναι μανθάνομεν, παντοίως ὑπό τινων δεισιδαιμόνων μιαίνεσθαί φησιν· εἴδωλά τε γὰρ πάσης ἐξωλείας ἄξια παρ' αὐτὴν ἱδρῦσθαι καὶ βωμὸν ἐδήλωσεν πλησίον ἑστάναι καὶ θυσίας ἀκαθάρτους συνεχῶς ἐπιτελεῖσθαι. Greek text from F. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke, Bande 1: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975).

[13] *VC* 3.53.3 ἐκεῖνο δὲ πρό γε ἁπάντων παραφυλάξαι ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ὅπως μηδεὶς πρὸς τοὐπιὸν τῶν ἐναγῶν ἐκείνων καὶ μυσαρῶν ἀνθρώπων τῷ τόπῳ πλησιάσαι τολμήσῃ· Text from Winkelman (1975).

After delivering these instructions, Constantine reminded the bishops that at Mamre:

> the Savior himself with two angels first vouchsafed the manifestation of himself to Abraham, there that God began to manifest himself to mankind, there that he spoke to Abraham about about his future seed and instantly fulfilled his promise, and there that he predicted he would be the father of many nations.[14]

Constantine ended his letter with a special charge to the bishops, stating:

> This site should be both kept clear of every defilement and restored to its ancient holy state, so that no other activity goes on there except the performance of the cult appropriate to God the Almighty, our Savior, and the Lord of the Universe.[15]

The terms in which Constantine reportedly described the offensive behavior at Mamre are worthy of comment and, together with the descriptions of Socrates and Sozomen, allow one to gain some idea of what Eutropia witnessed there.

Eutropia reportedly saw idols beside the terebinth tree, an altar nearby, and "sacrifices constantly conducted." Constantine's letter does not state who was taking part in the sacrifices, but the letter stipulates that in the future "none of those accursed and foul people" should dare to come near the place. Constantine's remark appears to be a rather generic term of invective intended to anathematize those taking part in rituals the emperor considered unorthodox. Sozomen's description of the rites at Mamre suggests that Constantine's "accursed and foul people" were Jews and pagans worshipping at Mamre, although as I

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[14] VC 3.53.3. Translation from Cameron and Hall (1996) 142–3. οὐ γὰρ ἀγνοεῖτε ἐκεῖ πρῶτον τὸν τῶν ὅλων δεσπότην θεὸν καὶ ὦφθαι τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ διειλέχθαι. ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου νόμου θρησκεία τὴν καταρχὴν εἴληφεν, ἐκεῖ πρῶτον ὁ σωτὴρ αὐτὸς μετὰ τῶν δύο ἀγγέλων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιφάνειαν τῷ Ἀβραὰμ ἐπεδαψιλεύσατο, ἐκεῖ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὁ θεὸς ἤρξατο φαίνεσθαι, ἐκεῖ τῷ Ἀβραὰμ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος αὐτῷ σπέρματος προηγόρευσεν καὶ παραχρῆμά γε τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν ἐπλήρωσεν, ἐκεῖ πλείστων ὅσων ἐθνῶν ἔσεσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα προεκήρυξεν. Greek text from F. Winkelmann (1975).

[15] VC 53.4. Translation from Cameron and Hall (1996) 142–3. Ὧν οὕτως ἐχόντων ἄξιόν ἐστιν, ὡς γέ μοι καταφαίνεται, διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας φροντίδος καὶ καθαρὸν ἀπὸ παντὸς μιάσματος τὸν τόπον τοῦτον φυλάττεσθαι καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἁγιότητα ἀνακαλέσασθαι, ὡς μηδὲν ἕτερον ἐπ' αὐτοῦ πράττεσθαι, ἢ τὴν πρέπουσαν τῷ παντοκράτορι καὶ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν ὅλων δεσπότῃ θεῷ τελεῖσθαι θρησκείαν. Greek text from F. Winkelmann (1975).

discuss below, Christians were probably taking part in the rituals that Eutropia and Constantine found offensive.

Constantine's order to clear the area of offending rituals and peoples and construct a basilica worthy of the Church was intended to establishing Church authority over a site that Christians, Jews, and pagans believed to be ritually powerful. In addition, Constantine's letter suggests that Eutropia, as well Constantine and perhaps Eusebius, considered the presence of non-Christian rituals to have ritually polluted the site, making it an unsuitable place for worship. Specifically, Constantine uses the term μιαίνεσθαι to describe what the superstitious persons (δεισιδαιμόνων) have done to Mamre. The verb μιαίνεσθαι implies that the rituals Eutropia worshipped had ritually defiled the site to such a degree that, to the mind of Constantine, the site was not suitable for Christian worship. Therefore the site had to be completely cleansed of non-Christian activity and a suitable Christian edifice constructed to help insure correct practice. However, as Sozomen's comments below indicate, Constantine's goal of site catharsis appears to have been difficult to effect in practice, and Mamre attracted non-Christians for years after Constantine's warning to the bishops of Palestine. The Christians, Jews, and others that continued to gather at Mamre appear not to have shared Constantine's fear of ritual pollution.

Writing approximately one-hundred years after Eusebius, Socrates Scholasticus briefly describes the rites at Mamre in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Socrates states:

> In turn [Constantine] built other churches. He constructed one church at the oak called Mamre, where the holy scriptures indicate that angels were entertained as guests in the presence of Abraham. For when the emperor learned that an altar was set up beneath the oak, and that Hellenic sacrifices were executed upon it, he accused, by means of a letter, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, and the emperor ordered that the altar be destroyed and that a house of prayer be constructed at the oak.[16]

[16] Socrates, *HE* 1.18.5–6. Αὖθις δὲ ἑτέρας ἐκκλησίας ἐποίει, καὶ μίαν μὲν ἐν τῇ καλουμένῃ δρυὶ τῇ Μαμβρῇ, ὑφ' ᾗ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἐξενίσθαι πρὸς τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ οἱ ἱεροὶ λόγοι μηνύουσιν, κατεσκεύασεν. Μαθὼν γὰρ ὁ βασιλεὺς βωμὸν ὑπὸ τῇ δρυὶ ἱδρύσθαι καὶ θυσίας Ἑλληνικὰς τελεῖσθαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ, μέμφεται μὲν δι'ἐπιστολῆς Εὐσεβίῳ τῷ τῆς Καισαρείας ἐπισκόπῳ, κελεύει δὲ τὸν μὲν βωμὸν ἀνατραπῆναι, πρὸς δὲ τῇ δρυὶ κατασκευασθῆναι οἶκον εὐκτήριον. Greek text from Günther Christian Hansen, ed., *Socrates Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995) 58–9.

Socrates' account of the event appears to draw from Eusebius' earlier history. Socrates does not mention Eutropia's visit to the Holy Land, however, stating only that Constantine learned of altars and sacrifices at Mamre. Like Eusebius, Socrates reports that Constantine ordered the altars to be abolished and a Christian edifice constructed on the site. Socrates does not mention the belief that Christ appeared at Mamre, noting only, in an apparent reference to *Genesis* 18, that the "holy scriptures" described an angelic epiphany to Abraham. This may indicate that Socrates did not share Eusebius' enthusiasm for understanding one of the three angels as the pre-incarnate Christ.

Socrates describes the sacrifices as Hellenic, a term that Eusebius did not employ.[17] In a religious context the word Hellenic can be understood to mean "pagan." As I discuss below, Sozomen also uses the term Hellenic to describe religious practices at Mamre. Here, the term Hellenic designates particular religious practices that Christian authorities had found offensive and describes the medium through which *Hellenes* understood the legend of the epiphany at Mamre. Although those taking part in Hellenic rituals may not have understood the Christian belief in a pre-incarnate *Logos* and may not have considered themselves to be sons of Abraham, numerous inscribed dedications attest to the belief in divine *angeloi* among *Hellenes* in diverse areas of the later Roman world, as this study demonstrates.

Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History*, composed shortly after 440, contains the most detailed description of the rites at Mamre.[18] The occasion of Sozomen's description is his discussion of Constantine's church building program and the visit of the emperor's mother-in-law, Eutropia, to the Holy Land, in approximately 323. Sozomen's account follows the narrative established by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine*, but Sozomen adds sufficient detail to explain Eutropia's shock and displeasure at Mamre. According to Sozomen, the emperor's mother-in-law Eutropia encountered Christians worshipping alongside *Hellenes*, who were invoking angels, and Jews venerating a site where angels appeared to Abraham. Sozomen states that these three groups gathered together on the occasion of a festival where participants offered sacrifices in the Hellenic manner. Sozomen asserts that Eutropia witnessed these events and reported them to the emperor Constantine, who wrote to

[17] On Socrates' use of *Hellenes* and cognates, see Urbainczyk (1997) 29–32, 89–92.
[18] Sozomen, *HE* 2.4.

the bishops of Palestine and the imperial *comes*, demanding that non-Christian rites be prohibited at the site, and that a suitable basilica be built there.[19] Eusebius and Socrates corroborate this general sequence of events, but lack Sozomen's detailed description. Sozomen states:

> And it is necessary to relate the designs of the Emperor Constantine concerning the oak called Mamre. This place, which they now call Terebinth, is fifteen stades south of Hebron, which it neighbors, and it is about two hundred and fifty stades from Jerusalem. Indeed, concerning this place there is a true story that the Son of God appeared to Abraham along with angels sent against the Sodomites and he announced to him the birth of a son. And in this place even now, the locals as well as Palestinians, Phoenicians, and Arabs hold a brilliant festival every year in the summer. And many come together, both merchants and customers, on account of the market. The festival is extremely popular with everyone, with the Jews because they take pride in Abraham as their patriarch, with the Hellenes because of the angels' presence there, and among the Christians also because he who was born afterwards of a virgin for the salvation of mankind showed himself clearly to a pious man.[20]

Sozomen's description contains several details pertinent to understanding how *angeloi* were objects of veneration in several religious traditions and the manner in which a site such as Mamre could be sacred to Jews, Christians, and pagans. The festival that Sozomen describes appears to have grown around the tradition of the angelic epiphany recorded at *Genesis* 18.

Sozomen's account of how *Hellenes* understood the sacred character of the site and his use of the term *Hellenes* to describe non-Christians and non-Jews reveal the manner in which Hellenism served as cultural and linguistic medium for expressing divergent religious con-

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[19] Sozomen, *HE* 2.4; cf. Socrates, *HE* 1.18 and Eusebius, *VC* 3.51–3.

[20] Sozomen, *HE* 2.4.1–3. Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ διεξελθεῖν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν δρῦν τὴν Μαμβρῆ καλουμένην βεβουλευμένα Κωνσταντίνῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ. τόπος δὲ οὗτος, ὃν νῦν Τερέβινθον προσαγορεύουσιν, ἀπὸ δέκα καὶ πέντε σταδίων γείτονα τὴν Χεβρὼν πρὸς μεσημβρίαν ἔχων, Ἱεροσολύμων δὲ διεστὼς ἀμφὶ διακόσια καὶ πεντήκοντα στάδια. οὗ δὴ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀληθὴς ἅμα τοῖς κατὰ Σοδομιτῶν ἀποσταλεῖσιν ἀγγέλοις καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανῆναι τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ προειπεῖν αὐτῷ τοῦ παιδὸς τὴν γέννησιν. ἐνταῦθα δὲ λαμπρὰν εἰσέτι νῦν ἐτήσιον πανήγυριν ἄγουσιν ὥρᾳ θέρους οἱ ἐπιχώριοι καὶ οἱ προσωτέρω Παλαιστῖνοι καὶ Φοίνικες καὶ Ἀράβιοι· συνίασι δὲ πλεῖστοι καὶ ἐμπορείας ἕνεκα πωλήσοντες καὶ ἀγοράσοντες. πᾶσι δὲ περισπούδαστος ἡ ἑορτή, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν καθότι πατριάρχην αὐχοῦσι τὸν Ἀβραάμ, Ἕλλησι δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐπιδημίαν τῶν ἀγγέλων, τοῖς δ' αὖ Χριστιανοῖς ὅτι καὶ τότε ἐπεφάνη τῷ εὐσεβεῖ ἀνδρὶ ὁ χρόνοις ὕστερον ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου γένους διὰ τῆς παρθένου φανερῶς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιδείξας. Greek text after J. Bidez, as it appears in *Sozomène: Histoire ecclésiastique*, Livres I–II (Paris: du Cerf, 1983).

cepts in mutually intelligible terms. Like Socrates, Sozomen uses the word *Hellenes* in the sense of "pagans." However, the word can also mean "Greeks" or, in this case "participants in Greek culture," while simultaneously denoting participants in traditional polytheism.[21] By keeping in mind that *Hellenes* can describe pagans, as well as those who participated in an international Hellenic culture, one can grasp why the polytheists at Mamre understood the sacred character of the site in terms of *angeloi*. While the tradition of Abraham was particularly Jewish, and the tradition of the pre-incarnate Logos was uniquely Christian, the practice of venerating spiritual intermediaries was common several religious traditions, all of which could describe mediators between heaven and earth by the Hellenic term *angelos*. Sozomen's choice of the terms *Hellenes* and *angeloi* helps to explain how those outside of Judaism and Christianity would have understood the sacred character of the site of Mamre. Sozomen's statement that pagans worshipped *angeloi* at Mamre communicates the manner in which a non-Christian population would understand the epiphanies associated with the site and the manner in which the Greek term *angelos* could express a similar concept of mediation in divergent religious beliefs in a universally intelligible manner.[22]

Sozomen's history purports to describe religious practices at Mamre in the early-fourth century and the Constantinian conversion of the site. His description of the site offers valuable insight into the similarities in religious ritual among Christians, *Hellenes*, and Jews. In addition, Sozomen was a native of the holy land, and his detailed description of Mamre suggests that some of the fourth-century rituals continued until his own day, in the early-fifth century.[23] Sozomen

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[21] See discussion in Chapter 1.

[22] It is clear from Sozomen's statements that he refers to Hellenic *angelos* veneration. However, for a different reading, see J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 88, who states "Nevertheless, despite Sozomen's careful record, it is unclear how the pagans came to revere the site, or quite what their beliefs were. When Sozomen tells us that 'angels' were the reason for the pagan cult, we must of course understand him to mean 'pagan deities.'" The present author would beg to differ. Contrary to Taylor's statement, Sozomen does give the reader the reason why "pagans" venerated the site, as demonstrated above. Also, contrary to what Taylor suggests, we do not have to understand Sozomen to "mean" anything. Simply understanding what he says—namely that *Hellenes* worshipped *angeloi*—reveals a great deal more.

[23] Sozomen's family came from Gaza, see below, n. 30.

describes the manner in which Jews, Christians, and *Hellenes* worshipped and prayed side-by-side. He states:

> οἱ μὲν εὐχόμενοι τῷ πάντων θεῷ, οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἐπικαλούμενοι καὶ οἶνον σπένδοντες καὶ λίβανον θύοντες ἢ βοῦν ἢ τράγον ἢ πρόβατον ἢ ἀλεκτρυόνα.[24]
>
> Some prayed to the God of All, while others called upon the angels, offered wine, and sacrificially burned incense, an ox, a ram, a sheep, or a cock.

Sozomen's use of οἱ μὲν…οἱ δὲ suggests that the he is describing two groups, one that prayed to the "God of all" and did not take part in the sacrifices, and another group that offered a variety of sacrifices while calling upon angels. Because Sozomen was a Christian, one may assume that he is describing Christians (and perhaps Jews) when he states that one group prayed to the "God of All." Likewise, those that Sozomen states were taking part in sacrifice and angel invocation were the *Hellenes*. The actual situation at Mamre in the early-fourth century was probably not as tidy as Sozomen's language suggests. It seems more likely that Christians were at the festival taking part in Hellenic rituals alongside Jews, and that furthermore, it would have been very difficult to sort out who was a Christian, who a Jew, and who a "Hellene."[25] Presumably there were some visitors, like Contantine's mother-in-law, whose Christian sensibilities prevented them from partaking in "Hellenic" rituals. However, one could conjecture that many Christians did offer libations and call upon *angeloi*, and thus it was the lack of distinction among the worshippers at Mamre, that Eutropia—and subsequently Constantine—found particularly alarming.

Sozomen offers further details for explicitly "Hellenic" rituals of angel veneration focused on the well at Mamre.[26] He states:

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[24] Sozomen *HE,* 2.4.3. Text after J. Bidez (1983).

[25] Rothaus (2000) 133, suggests as much, but does not note the manner in which Sozomen (very vaguely) implies the existence of two groups of participants.

[26] I. Magen, "Mamre," in *The New Encylopedia of Archaeological Sites in the Holy Land*, Vol. 3, ed. Ephraim Stern et al. (1993) 942, confirms that the well at Mamre is naturally occurring and not a cistern, which suggests a degree of physical similarity between Mamre and the other site of angel veneration I discuss in this chapter, where natural pools and springs are the focus of ritual activity. For the site in the Roman era, see also Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni, and J. Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani: Iudaea Palestina* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994) 177, s.v. "Mamre."

> περὶ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς πανηγύρεως οὐδεὶς ἐντεῦθεν ὑδρεύετο. νόμῳ γὰρ Ἑλληνικῷ οἱ μὲν λύχνους ἡμμένους ἐνθάδε ἐτίθεσαν, οἱ δὲ οἶνον ἐπέχεον ἢ πόπανα ἔρριπτον, ἄλλοι δὲ νομίσματα ἢ μύρα ἢ θυμιάματα.[27]
>
> Around the time of the festival, no one drew water [from the well]. For, according to Hellenic custom, some placed burning lamps there, and others offered wine or threw in cakes, and still others threw in coins or myrrh, or incense.

Presumably, those placing lamps, coins, and cakes at the well in the Hellenic manner are the *Hellenes* that Sozomen states were calling upon angels.[28] These same *Hellenes* might also have offered a ram or cock upon the altar at Mamre, as Sozomen describes some worshippers as doing. However, it is suggestive that Sozomen explicitly states that the offering of lamps, libations, coins, and incense at the well was "according to Hellenic custom." Sozomen fails to state that Jews or Christians did not take part in making dedications at the well, "according to Hellenic custom." It is implicit in his description then, that Christians and Jews also worshipped at the well in a manner that Sozomen describes as "Hellenic." Sozomen's description of the apparent participation of all religious groups in casting offerings into the well according to Hellenic custom reveals the common language of religious piety in late antiquity. Although Eutropia was shocked at what she saw at Mamre, a Christian could apparently make a Christian offering in a "Hellenic" manner without threatening his or her Christian identity.

The Christian edifice that Constantine ordered the bishops to construct at Mamre appears to have been completed not long after Macarius received the emperor's letter, as the Bordeaux Pilgrim's account of his journey to the Holy Land in about the year 333 notes Constantinian buildings at the site. His eyewitness description states that Mamre is:

> where Abraham lived and dug a well beneath the Terebinth tree, and spoke and ate with the angels. An exceptionally beautiful basilica has been built there by command of Constantine.[29]

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[27] Sozomen, *HE*, 2.4.5. Text after J. Bidez (1983).

[28] S. Appelbaum, "Mamre," in *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Hold Land*, Vol. 3, ed. M. Avi-Yonah and Ephraim Stern (1975) 778, states that numerous coins from the reign of Constantine were found in the well.

[29] *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 599. Translation from J. Wilkenson, *Egeria's Travels* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1999) 33–4. For Latin text, see *Itineraria et alia geographica* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 175) (Turnhout: Brespols, 1965).

The Bordeaux Pilgrim's account of his journey is little more than a list of places visited. However, he does not mention Mamre as the site of a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ. Rather, like Socrates, the pilgrim states only that Mamre is the place where the angels visited Abraham.

Based on the Pilgrim's testimony, it appears that by 333 one part the Christianization of the site had begun. However, Sozomen's fifth-century testimony suggests that rituals of angel veneration "according to Hellenic custom" may have continued for some time afterwards. Sozomen states that "even now" (εἰσέτι νῦν), meaning the first half of the fifth century, the locals, Palestinians, Phoenicians, and Arabs, all gathered at Mamre for the annual festival.[30] This is the same summer festival that Sozomen asserts was popular in the early-fourth century with *Hellenes*, Christians, and Jews. The description of lamp offerings at the well in Sozomen's fifth-century account, where Eusebius lacks any such description, suggests the possibility that one could still witness similar rituals at Mamre in Sozomen's own day.

While it is generally acknowledged that Sozomen derived his basic narrative structure from Eusebius, he often, as at Mamre, provides evidence of first-hand autopsy of the holy sites in his homeland.[31] Sozomen's eyewitness knowledge of the holy land and the abundance of detail in his description of Mamre suggests that certain aspects of pre-Constantinian ritual survived into the early-fifth century. Although the construction of the basilica at the site would surely have destroyed whatever idols and altars there were, more subtle forms of Hellenic worship, such as offering lamps at the well, could have continued after the conversion of the site. However, if Christians offered lamps to *angeloi* at the well in Sozomen's day, they would probably have considered their actions to be compatible with Christianity.

Archaeological evidence from Mamre supports this reading of Sozomen's description. Excavations in the late 1920s revealed that the well described by Sozomen received numerous coins dating to the reign of Constantine, as well as numerous lamps dating to the fourth through

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[30] Sozomen, *HE* 2.4.2.

[31] Rothaus (2000) 132, suggest a similar possibility. For examples of Sozomen's knowledge of his homeland, see Soz., *HE*, 3.14.21–28, where he discusses the life of Hilarion with reference to topographical details in Gaza; and *HE* 5.15.13–5, where Sozomen discusses the flight of his grandfather to the village of Bethelea in Gaza, at the time of Julian's persecution.

sixth centuries, some containing Christian crosses.[32] Three lamps are inscribed with the formula: Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίναι πᾶσιν, "The Light of Christ shines upon All." The inscriptions on the lamps suggest that some of those offering lamps were Christians. Thus, some of the practices that Sozomen attributes to the early-fourth century appear to have been part of Christian ritual after the construction of the Constantinian basilica.

The 6th century Piacenza Pilgrim's account of his travels provides additional details of the post-Constantinian rituals at Mamre. He states that Jews and Christians both gathered in the courtyard of the Constantinian basilica, where they were separated by a partition, and that both groups gathered to feast at the site.[33] Thus, it appears that Constantine's efforts at Christianization met with limited success. The bishops of Palestine and imperial *comes* saw to the construction of the basilica, and probably the destruction of the altars, but rituals that Sozomen describes as "Hellenic" continued for at least a century. Furthermore, non-Christians gathered at the site, albeit in a segregated manner, for at least two hundred years after the construction of the Constantinian basilica.

Our sources for the rituals at Mamre suggests that it was the syncretistic character of *angelos* veneration and the lack of distinction between religious groups at Mamre that shocked Eutropia and

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[32] E. Mader, *Mambre: die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen im heiligen Bezirk Ramet el-Halil in Südpalästina 1926–1928* (Freiburg: Erich Wewel, 1957) 151–64 describes a large number of lamps at Mamre. A large number date to the fourth through sixth centuries and some contain Christian crosses. Three, L 163a, L 169 b and f, contain the formula: Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίναι πᾶσιν. Magen (1993) 942 and Appelbaum (1975) 778 confirm that a large number of coins dating from the reign of Constantine were found deposited in the well, in addition to numerous late Roman lamps found at the site; see also Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni, and J. Green (1994) 177, s.v. "Mamre."

[33] The Piacenza Pilgrim (586 or 597) *Itenerarium* 30: De Bethleem autem usque ad ilicem Mambre sunt milia XXIV, in quo loco iacent Abraham et Isaac et Iacob et Sarra, sed et ossa Ioseph, basilica aedificata in quadraporticus, in medio atrio discopertus, per medio discurrit cancellus et ex uno latere intrant Christiani et ex alio latere Iudaei, incensa facientes multa. Nam et deposito Iacob et Dauid in terra illa alio die de natale Domini deuotissime celebratur, ita ut ex omni terra illa Iudaei conueniant, innumerabilis multitudo, et incentes offerentes multa vel lumnaria et munera dantes ad servientes ibidem. Latin text from *Itineraria et alia geographica* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 175) (Turnhout: Brespols, 1965) 144. See also J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem before the Crusades* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1977) 85 and A. Elad, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage to Hebron (al-Khalil) During the Early Muslim Period (638?–1099)," in *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*, B. F. Le Beau and M. Mor, edd. (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996) 21–62.

inspired Constantine to act. Eusebius' record of Constantine's letter to the bishops of Palestine makes it clear that the emperor wished to establish Christian authority over a scripturally significant and ritually powerful place. The Christian structure that Constantine ordered would have aided in the separation of Christians from non-Christians at the well of Mamre. However, Sozomen's account suggests that while Church authorities may have been successful in separating Christians from non-Christians at the site, certain forms of Hellenic ritual—including *angelos* veneration and the offering of lamps, cakes, and coins—survived into Sozomen's day, and non-Christians gathered at the site into the sixth century. However, while Sozomen recognized the non-Christian origins of lamp rituals at the well of Mamre, such a pedigree for the rituals may have escaped the concern of the Christian worshippers and Christian authorities at Mamre. For them, dedicating lamps in a "Hellenic" manner did not affect the efficacy of the offering, nor did it affect their own Christian identity.

Corinth: The Fountain of the Lamps

Although Mamre is distinctive due to the biblical traditions surrounding it, its rituals of lamp offerings to *angeloi* are not without parallel, nor is it the only site where those of different religious traditions worshipped side-by-side in a manner that Sozomen could describe as Hellenic. Archaeological evidence from the Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth, a site known only from archaeological evidence, suggests that certain people associated *angeloi* with the site and prayed to them while offering lamps, coins, and other objects. Richard Rothaus, in a monograph on religious change in late Roman Corinth, notes the similarity between the rituals Sozomen describes at Mamre and the forms of religious practice suggested by the archaeological evidence from the Fountain of the Lamps.[34] At both sites, worshippers offered lamps, coins, and non-animal sacrifices to *angeloi*.

The lamps recovered at the site display names and ritual elements drawn from Christianity, Judaism, and magical texts. The ancient name of the site is unknown, and archaeologists gave the site its present name because of the approximately four thousand lamps discov-

[34] R. Rothaus, *Corinth: First City of Greece* (Brill: Leiden, 2000) 126–34.

ered in the course of excavation.[35] The site lies at the northern edge of ancient Corinth, where, in the Roman imperial period, the natural spring was transformed into a fountain house. Following a violent disruption in the late-fourth century, the fountain house was destroyed, leaving only a grotto, where water continued to flow. This grotto area in the remains of the fountain house appears to have been sealed off, following a seismic disruption of the mid-sixth century. In the approximately two hundred years between, when the area was a semi-natural grotto, the site received about four-thousand mould-made terra cotta lamps, as well as coins and lead curse tablets, which survive in far fewer numbers.

Four of the lamps deposited at the fountain bear inscriptions which suggest that, in late Roman Corinth, some men and women believed that *angeloi* frequented the spring. The most revealing of the inscriptions appears on Lamp 1 (Figure 5.1), below, dated to the fifth or early-sixth century:

> Lamp 1:
> [Side A]+ Ἄγγελοι οἱ κατοι/ [Side B]κοῦντ(ες) ἐπὶ τοῖς ὕδασιν τούτοις[36]
>
> + Angels who dw/ell upon these waters.

This inscription reveals that at least one ancient visitor to the Fountain of the Lamps believed that angels dwelled there. The lamp and its archaeological context evoke the scene described by Sozomen at Mamre, where the pious dedicated lamps to angels "according to Hellenic custom." The cross-symbol at the beginning of the inscription suggests that the dedicator considered himself (or herself) to be a Christian, or the dedicator believed that the Christian symbol would make the prayer more effective. Thus, while it might have been a Hellenic custom to offer lamps, the dedicator of this lamp thought it necessary, or perhaps ritually efficacious, to inscribe a Christian symbol on the lamp.

The other inscribed dedications from the Fountain of the Lamps do not include references to Christianity, and a few contain ritual formulas similar to invocations found on magical amulets and spells. For this reason, James Wiseman speculated that the spring was the focus

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[35] See J. Wiseman, "The Fountain of the Lamps," *Archaeology* 23 (1970) 130–7; Wiseman, "The Gymnasium Area at Corinth, 1969–1970," *Hesperia* 41 (1972) 1–42, esp. 9–33.

[36] Text and translation after D. Jordan, "Inscribed Lamps from a Cult at Corinth in Late Antiquity," *Harvard Theological Review* 87 (1994) 224. Lamp 1= Corinth Inv. L-69–103; Wiseman (1972) no. 21. See figure 5.1.

of magical activity between the fourth and sixth centuries.[37] Lamp 2 (Figure 5.2) supports Wiseman's statement, as it invokes angels and bears a striking similarity to invocations found in the Greek magical papyri and protective amulets. The inscription reads as follows:

> Lamp 2:
> [Side A] [Ἐπικαλ]οῦμέ σε τὸν / [μέγαν] θεὸν Σαβαοθ, / [τὸν Μι]χαηλ, τὸν Γα/βρηλ, ὅπως /
>
> [Side B] ποιήσης ΩΣ / ΩΣ ταῦτα ΦΥΣΟΝ / [--] ΚΕΤΟΣΩΔΥ[-]ΔΡ [----]ON[38]
>
> [Side A] I invoke you by the great god Sabaoth, by Michael, by Gabriel in order
>
> [Side B] that you do…

In his publication of this text David Jordan queried whether Michael and Gabriel were also the *angeloi* referred to in the previous lamp inscription (Lamp 1).[39] Considering the popularity of these two archangels in Christian, Jewish, and syncretistic invocations, such a conjecture seems very likely. The archangels Michael and Gabriel are well known from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. However, the name Sabaoth originates from the title of Yahweh as the Lord of Hosts in Isaiah's vision of the divine throne.[40] In Isaiah, Sabaoth functions as title of God, (i.e. "of Hosts"), but in late antiquity Sabaoth became a name in its own right, appearing on a number of Jewish and syncretistic amulets and *defixiones*, as well as in numerous spells contained in the Greek Magical Papyri.[41]

Unfortunately, due to the state of Lamp 2, one cannot know what the dedicator wanted Michael, Gabriel, and Sabaoth to do. However, similar invocations found in the Greek Magical Papyri, and on magical amulets and *defixiones* offer some suggestions. A spell for lamp divination that appears in one of the Berlin magical papyri (dated to the fourth or fifth century), invokes Michael, Gabriel, and Sabaoth (as well

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[37] Wiseman (1972) 26–8.

[38] Text and translation after Jordan (1994) 225. Lamp 2= Corinth Inv. L-4607; Wiseman (1972) no. 22. See figure 5.2.

[39] Jordan (1994) 225.

[40] Isaiah 6:3, LXX: ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος, κύριος σαβαοθ.

[41] C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1950) 170. E.g. *PGM* II.115, III.70–80, III. 220–5. Cf. *IG* 14.859 (Puteoli), which invokes "Holy" Seothe, Sabaoth (twice), Iao, El, Michael, and Nephthao, and, based on letter forms, probably dates to ca. 250 CE.

as Apollo, Iao, Adonai, and Eloaios) in order to summon a daimon for questioning about future events, dreams, and revelations.[42] The spell calls for a rite involving setting the lamp upon a wolf's head and constructing an altar of unburned clay, actions which may have been impractical at the Fountain of the Lamps. However, the spell's instructions to use a lamp while invoking Michael, Gabriel, and Sabaoth are potentially illustrative of the type of rituals that may have accompanied the dedication of Lamp 2.

A number of protective amulets from the period also invoke Michael, Gabriel, and Sabaoth. These amulets frequently ask for aid or protection and typically feature a "Holy Rider" figure who spears a female demon, understood to represent the malevolent forces threatening the bearer.[43] Such amulets often blend Jewish, Christian, and polytheistic ritual elements, resulting in syncretistic ritual formulas designed for efficacy rather than orthodoxy. The syncretistic and private ritual character of such amuletic invocations of Michael, Gabriel, and Sabaoth appears similar to that of Lamp 2, suggesting that the lost portion of the inscription may have been a request for protection or aid.

One of the four lead *defixiones* discovered at the Fountain of the Lamps may also invoke Sabaoth. This *defixio* contains an engraved representation of an anguipede with a human head and body. According to Wiseman's description (the *defixio* has not received full publication) the anguipede "holds a raised sword in his right hand, a gleaming staff in his left; a snake is wrapped around the staff."[44] As Wiseman correctly notes, other *defixiones* and amulets often label this figure Sabaoth.[45] Thus, some in antiquity appear to have considered the Fountain of the Lamps a ritually efficacious site for invoking Sabaoth, the leader of myriads of angels.

The remainder of the inscribed lamps from the Fountain of the Lamps contain texts that are less complete than those on Lamps 1 and 2. However, these inscriptions also suggests that some people believed the Fountain of the Lamps to be a ritually efficacious site to invoke a plurality of spiritual beings by means of lamp offerings. The texts of

[42] *PGM* I.262–347= *P. Berol.* inv. 5025.

[43] See Bonner (1950) nos. 300, 309, 311, 315, 324. See also Chapter 6.

[44] Wiseman (1972) 33.

[45] Wiseman (1972) 33, who notes that the figure is often named Iao or Abrasax as well. For example, see A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques Gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1964) no. 312. See also E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (1953) 245–58.

these inscriptions leave open the possibility that they were directed towards *angeloi* as well. A certain Fabiana dedicated the next example, Lamp 3. The lamp exhibits an inscription that combines a ritual formula known from Christian graffiti with a request for mercy from more than one deity. The text reads as follows:

Lamp 3:
Side A: Εὐκαταλλακτοι
γένεσθε τῇ

Side B: δούλῃ ὑμῶν Φαβιαν[ῇ][46]

The formula "your servant" appears in a number of early Christian graffiti, such as on the walls of the temple-church at Aphrodisias.[47] However, at Aphrodisias the second-person possessive is singular, reflecting Christian monotheism. Fabiana, however, states that she is the servant of more than one power and she requests that more than one being show her mercy. While it is impossible to state for certain what supernatural powers Fabiana requested mercy from, in light of the evidence from lamps 1 and 2, it is likely that she made her dedication to angelic beings believed to dwell at or near the natural spring.

A fourth lamp contains a partially legible inscription revealing that the lamp was probably a prayer offering. Beyond this, the text is barely legible and little sense can be made from it. Based on Jordan's reading of the inscription, the only legible lines are as follows:

Lamp 4:
Side A: ὡς ΤΑ[---ca. 15----]/ΑΚΗ[---ca.13---]ΚΟΣ

Side B: Τ[2–3]Α τῆς θυγατρὸς Ἐρω/τ[ίου] κὲ εὐτύχη[48]

Based on the restored and partial reading of κὲ εὐτύχη, one can cautiously posit that the lamp was dedicated as a prayer-offering. The phrase would then mean "may it/she/he fare well." The phrase τῆς θυγατρὸς Ἐρω/τ[ίου] suggests that the lamp was offered by a woman, who identified herself through matrilineal descent, a practice commonly found in

[46] Text and translation after D. Jordan (1994) 225. Lamp 3= Corinth Inv. L-69–104; Wiseman (1972) no. 23.

[47] C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies 1989) nos. 118, 129.

[48] Text after D. Jordan (1994) 225–6. Jordan suggests: for κὲ εὐτύχη, read και εὐτύχει. Lamp 4 = Corinth Inv. L-69–105; Wiseman (1972) no. 24.

magical texts.[49] The legible portion of the inscription does not reveal to whom the lamp was dedicated, but based on the other inscribed lamps, one may conjecture that it was dedicated to angels or Sabaoth.[50]

A persistent question in all discussions of the Fountain of the Lamps has been the religious identity of the site and of the dedications. Wiseman described the site as a "place of magic" because of types of inscriptions found on the lamps, because of the *defixiones* discovered there, and because archaeological evidence suggests that many grottos and springs were sites where people practiced rites such as depositing curse tablets or *defixiones*.[51] Sensibly, Wiseman avoided describing the site as pagan or Christian, noting only that the dedications had both Christian and pagan decorative motifs.[52] Jordan posited a different answer to the question of religious identity stating, "If the graffiti are an indication, the cross at the beginning of Lamp 1 shows that the worship was Christian."[53] Jordan displays some caution in his statement, but I would urge even more care in making such generalizations. The cross at the beginning of Lamp 1 reveals that one person believed that the cross-symbol would make their offering more effective. That person may have been Christian, and the cross at the beginning of the graffito may indicate a desire on the part of the dedicator to distinguish his or her Christian dedication from the numerous other dedications of indeterminate religious identity. However, the cross-symbol does not prove that the worshipper was a Christian, and it does not prove that worship at the Fountain of the Lamps was Christian. But more importantly, defining the worship as "Christian" or otherwise may not tell us

[49] See J. G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 14, who states that the practice of identifying people by matrilineal descent is characteristic of magical spells from the second century CE onwards. Gager notes that several theories have been advanced to explain the phenomenon, including: Egyptian or Babylonian influence and, as seems most likely to the present author, the desire for precise identification. See also D. Jordan, "*CIL* VIII 19525(B).2 QPVULVA= Q(UEM) P(EPERIT) VULVA," *Philologus* 120 (1976) 127–32.

[50] The preliminary reading of this inscription, published by J. Wiseman (1972) 32, suggested that the lamp was dedicated to "Eros the healing doctor," whom as Wiseman put it, was summoned "not to minister to a physical pain, but to a spiritual (sexual) pain." The dedicator may have prayed for sexual healing, but based on Jordan's revised (and I believe correct) reading of the inscription, such sentiments are not explicitly inscribed.

[51] Wiseman (1972) 26–8.

[52] Wiseman (1972) 27–8.

[53] Jordan (1994) 226.

much about religious practices at the Fountain of the Lamps. A more useful approach would be to see worship at the Fountain of the Lamps as a form of later Roman ritual through which people from a variety of religious traditions choose to communicate with supernatural beings.

Rothaus has suggested that the Fountain of the Lamps was neither pagan nor Christian and he argues that the categories Christian and pagan break down when considered at a the level of religious practice.[54] Rothaus argues further that the Fountain of the Lamps was sacred to the nymphs, citing an unpublished *defixio* from the fountain of the lamps, that reportedly invokes nymphs.[55] Based on such evidence, Rothaus concludes that the Fountain of the Lamps was a "polysemous" site where Christians might term the numinous inhabitants of the fountain *angeloi* but some might describe the otherworldly residents as "nymphs."[56] In support of this interpretation Rothaus notes Sozomen's description of Hellenes, Christians, and Jews worshipping at Mamre as well as the lamps offerings that Sozomen describes. Rothaus suggests that a similar phenomenon occurred at Corinth, arguing that pagans and Christians both offered lamps and coins, side by side, at the Fountain of the Lamps. Indeed, it seems very likely that Christians and non-Christians both prayed to, and invoked, *angeloi* at the Fountain of the Lamps. It also seems quite likely that *angelos* could be used as a descriptive title for the numinous beings associated with the fountain, beings that might also be called nymphs. In other words, *angelos* could describe their function as messengers who convey inscribed prayers. Thus, a non-Christian could alternatively use the terms nymph and *angelos* to denote the same entity.

The occasional use of *angeloi* to describe the numinous beings associated with a spring, who might otherwise be called nymphs, is suggested by a recently published *defixio* (dated to the second half of the 4th century) from the Fountain of Anna Perenna at Rome. The *defixio* provides a suggestive comparison to the dedications from Corinth and indicates that the occasional use of the term *angeloi* for nymphs was not limited to the Fountain of the Lamps. The text calls upon the *sacras santas* (probably the nymphs of Anna Perenna) and the *supteri et angili* [sic] (the angels and infernal gods) to remove the eyes of

[54] Rothaus (2000) 126–34.
[55] Rothaus (2000) 129, citing a personal communication with David Jordan.
[56] Rothaus (2000) 131–2.

a man named Sura.[57] The *defixio* most likely calls the beings *angeli* because of their perceived ability to communicate with the underworld. Thus, *angelos/angelus* would appear to be a term that is used on occasion to describe the role of the nymphs (and possibly other numinous beings) as mediators between the earth and some other realm. The association of nymphs and angels on a dedication from the Fountain of Anna Perenna supports Rothaus' contention that at Corinth's Fountain of the Lamps some worshippers could term the fountains deities nymphs, while other called them *angeloi*. However, if Rome's Fountain of Anna Perenna offers comparisons for Corinth, the intent of this and other *defixiones* from Anna Perenna also suggests that the *angeloi* who dwelled upon the waters at Corinth could have been invoked for more malicious purposes than surviving inscriptions from the Fountain of the Lamps would indicate.[58]

The Angel at the Bethesda Pool

Lamp 2 from the Fountain of the Lamps displays—in its invocation of Sabaoth, Michael, and Gabriel—language similar to that found on magical amulets and in magical spells. Lamp 1's dedicatory inscription to the angels who dwell upon the waters is, however, more unusual, and finds a close parallel in the legend of the *angelos* at the Bethesda pool and other traditions that associate *angeloi* with springs or pools. In a search for comparisons to this inscription, Jordan first noted a possible parallel between Lamp 1 and the Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem, as described in *John* 5:2–5.[59] Thus, although a similar dedication to *angeloi* has not surfaced, *John's* account appears to describe a similar belief in an *angelos* that frequents a body of water. As Jordan has noted,

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[57] J. Blänsdorf, "The Texts from the Fons Annae Perennae," in *Magical Practices in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.–1 Oct. 2005*, ed. R. L. Gordon and F. M. Simón (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 221–7; 236–41; with M. Piranomonte, "Religion and Magic at Rome: The Fountain of Anna Perenna," in Gordon and Simón (2010) 191–214.

[58] In addition to the other *defixiones* discussed in Blänsdorf (2010), see also the lamps with *defixiones* discussed in A. Mastrocinque, "Late Antique Lamps with Defixiones," *GRBS* 47 (2007) 87–9.

[59] Jordan (1994) 226–8. In addition to the example of the Bethesda Pool, Jordan notes that the *Acts of Thomas* describes a nocturnal Christian baptismal ritual that involved the lighting of lamps. While the *Acts of Thomas* account is an interesting description of early Christian ritual, it does not demand a more detailed investigation in this study.

the tradition that the angel of the Bethesda Pool could heal the infirm suggests that the angels believed to dwell upon the water at Corinth may have also been associated with healing.[60] This parallel deserves a more complete examination than Jordan was able to give it in his brief study. Literary references to Bethesda dating from the fourth century and afterwards indicate that the story of the angel at the Bethesda pool was well-known. The popularity of the legend of the angel at Bethesda suggests that the Gospel story may have influenced early Christian beliefs concerning angelic beings associated with the local pool and spring at Corinth. Thus, *John*'s description of the Bethesda pool not only provides a parallel for understanding the rituals of the Fountain of the Lamps, the similarity of belief in *angeloi* associated with a pool suggests that the legend of the angel of the Bethesda pool may have inspired Lamp 1's inscription. *John* 5:2–4 records the legend as follows:

> (2) Now in Jerusalem by the sheep gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Bethzatha,[61] which has five porticoes. (3) In these lay many invalids [—blind, lame, and paralyzed, waiting for the stirring of the water, (4) for an angel of the Lord went down at certain season into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring the water was cured from whatever disease that person had.][62]

John's narrative continues with the description of Jesus' healing of a man waiting by the pool.[63] *John* 5:3b–5:4, indicated by square brackets above, which describes the belief in an angel that visited the waters, does not appear in the oldest surviving manuscripts. For this reason, some scholars have suggested that verse four appeared later, as a gloss on the original passage.[64] Such a conjecture is possible. However, church

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[60] Jordan (1994) 227 and n. 15.

[61] Manuscripts also read Bethsaida and Bethesda.

[62] Trans. NRSV. (1.) Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. (2.) ἔστιν δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθζαθά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα. (3.) ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν [ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν, (4) ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου κατά καιρόν ἐλούετο ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα καί ἐτάρεσσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος ὑγιὴς ἐγίνετο οἱῳ δήποτ' οὖν κατείχετο νοσήματι](5.) ἦν δέ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα [καὶ] ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ αὐτοῦ·

[63] *John* 5:6–18.

[64] See, for example, E. Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 2 vols., trans. by R. W. Funk, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) I. 439–60, esp. p. 245. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i–xii)*. The Anchor Bible Vol. 29 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) 207.

fathers writing from the third century and afterward, including Tertullian, Hilary, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom, witness the existence of verse four.[65] Because of early witnesses to the existence of verse four, its absence from the earliest manuscripts of *John* does not undermine the verse's historical value for the study of later Roman religion.

Even if verse four is a gloss on an original text, it appears to describe a religious phenomenon at the Bethesda pool that existed in the first and second centuries CE and reveals beliefs current in Roman-era Judea. Verse four was intended to explain a local religious site to a non-Jerusalemite audience. In so doing, the verse explains why there happen to be great numbers of lame, paralyzed, and ill people lounging around the Bethesda Pool. Verse four also helps to make sense of *John* 5:7, in which the lame man states that he cannot be healed because he has no one to carry him to the pool, with the result that someone else always beats him to the water and he remains infirm. If the water alone could cure his illness, then he could presumably enter the pool whenever he wished to. The text does not question that healings at the pool actually occurred, and verse four explains the healings at the pool by attributing them to an *angelos*. The text's use of the term *angelos* is consistent with its attempt to explain a local religious site to a Hellenized audience living outside of Jerusalem. Hellenized Christians, Jews, and Gentiles shared similar ideas about spiritual intermediaries and termed such intermediaries *angeloi*. Thus, verse four effectively communicates and explains a local religious phenomenon in cosmopolitan language.

John 5:4 describes the belief in a healing angel at the Bethesda pool as it was in the first or second century. Archaeological evidence suggests that the site changed somewhat over the course of the second and third century. Dedications discovered at the Bethesda Pool suggest that the site became a sanctuary of Asclepius after Rome founded the colony of Aelia Capitolina at Jerusalem and converted Jewish sanctuaries into Greco-Roman ones.[66] That the site would be the home of the

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[65] See Greek New Testament (1994) *Kata Ioannen* 5:3, n. 4.

[66] J. Jeremias, *The Rediscovery of Bethesda: John 5:2*. New Testament Archaeology Monograph 1 (Lexington: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966) 25–6; 34. Originally published as *Die Wiederentdeckung von Bethesda. Johannes 5,2*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Neue Folge, 41. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1949). Because archaeologists also discovered two model boats and fragments of a stele representing a serpent and ears of wheat P. Benoit, "La Piscine de Bethesda," in *Jerusalem through the Ages: The Twenty-Fifth*

Greek god of healing seems appropriate. However, the architectural remains of a sanctuary of Asclepius appear to be indistinguishable from those of the earlier Bethesda Pool.[67]

The site of the Bethesda Pool became increasingly important for Christians in late antiquity because of the *Gospel of John's* description. The story of Jesus' healing of the lame man, and the accompanying legend of the angel at the Bethesda pool drew Christians to the site at least as early as the fourth century. A basilica marked the site by the fifth century.[68] Eusebius offers a brief description of the site in his *Onomasticon*,[69] and the Bordeaux Pilgrim describes the site as it was in 333, stating,

> In Jerusalem beside the Temple are two large pools, one to the right and the other to the left, built by Solomon, and further inside the city are the twin pools with five porches called Bethsaida. People who had been sick for many years used to be cured there. The water of these pools is turbid and its color is scarlet.[70]

In his spare account of his journey, the Bordeaux Pilgrim does not mention the legend of the *angelos* at Bethesda specifically. However, what the Pilgrim records indicates a familiarity with the angel legend. The Pilgrim states that those who were sick for many years were cured there. It is only *John* 5:4 that states that the multitude of lame and infirm were waiting for a cure, and it is this verse which states that an *angelos* of the Lord caused such a cure. Without verse four, the text only states that there was a multitude of infirm and that Jesus healed one of them, who had no one to carry him to the pool. Either the Bordeaux Pilgrim knew of the legend of Bethesda before arriving in the Holy Land, or

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Archaeological Convention, October 1967 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1968) 52–3, suggests that in the third century the pool became a site sacred to Serapis-Asclepius.

[67] Evidence for the Asklepieion consists entirely of numerous dedications appropriate for an Asclepius cult, including a marble foot dedicated by a certain Popeia Lucilla, see Jeremias (1966) 25–6.

[68] On the basilica, see Jeremias (1966) 19–20, 32.

[69] 58.20, *sv*. Βηζαθά.

[70] Itinerarium Burdigalense 589.7–11. Translation from John Wilkenson, Egeria's Travels (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1999) 29. Sunt in Hierusalem piscinae magnae duae ad latus templi, id est una ad dexteram, alia ad sinistram, quas Saloman fecit, interius vero civitati sunt piscinae gemellares quinque porticus habentes, quae appellantur Bethsaida. Ibi aegri multorum annorum sanabantur. Aquam autem habent hae piscinae in modum coccini turbatum. Latin text from Itineraria et alia geographica (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 175) (Turnhout: Brespols, 1965) 14–5.

once there, local guides were quick to inform the Christian visitors of the legends associated with biblical sites, such as the legend of the angel of Bethesda.[71]

Unfortunately, the surviving text of another fourth-century pilgrim account, Egeria's rather more detailed account of her pilgrimage in the Holy Land (381–4), does not describe the Bethesda pool.[72] However, Willibald's eighth-century itinerary indicates that the site was one of importance to Christian pilgrims in the centuries following the Bordeaux Pilgrim's visit.[73] In addition, fourth and fifth-century Latin and Greek church fathers refer to the legend of the angel at the Bethesda Pool, suggesting the popularity of the tale in the centuries following the Peace of the Church. For instance, Jerome makes reference to the legend of the angel at the Bethesda pool in his *Dialogus contra Luciferianos*, stating clearly that the waters of Bethesda could not cure the infirm except upon the arrival of the *angelus*.[74] John Chrysostom makes similar references to the legend of the *angelos* of Bethesda.[75]

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[71] Similarly, Cyril of Jerusalem (bishop ca. 350–387), in his *Homilia in paralyticum iuxta piscinam iacentam*, section 2, mentions the tradition that the first man into the pool would be cured, but neglects to mention the accompanying legend of the angel, stating only that there was a great lack of faith among the Jews: Ἐν γὰρ τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἦν προβατικὴ κολυμβήθρα πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα, τέσσαρας μὲν περιτρεχούσας, μέσην δὲ τὴν πέμπτην, ἐν ᾗ κατέκειτο πλῆθος ἀσθενούντων. καὶ ἀπιστία ἦν πολλὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. ὁ δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ σωμάτων ἰατρὸς καὶ θεραπευτὴς μέτρῳ τὴν ἴασιν ἐχαρίζετο, τὸν πολυχρόνιον πρῶτον θεραπεύων, ἵνα τάχιον ἀπαλλαγῇ τῶν ἀλγηδόνων. οὐ γὰρ μία ἡμέρα ἦν αὐτῷ κατακεῖσθαι, ὡς οὐδὲ δευτέρα, οὐδὲ πρῶτος μὴν ἢ ἐνιαυτός, ἀλλ' ὀκτὼ καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη. κατακείμενος πολυχρονίῳ νόσῳ γνώριμος ἦν τοῖς ὁρῶσιν, καὶ δεικνύων τοῦ θεραπεύοντος τὴν ἐνέργειαν. Greek text from W. C. Reischl and J. Rupp, *Cyrilli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 2. (Munich: Leitner, 1860; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967). In Cyril's case, the bishop may not have wished to comment upon a legend that threatened the unique nature of Jesus' miracle at the pool.

[72] Later descriptions of Jerusalem based on lost portions of Egeria's account suggest that she visited the area where the Bordeaux pilgrim saw the Pool of Bethesda. See J. Wilkenson, *Egeria's Travels* (Warminster: Aris and Philips, 1999) 86–8.

[73] The anonymous writer who recorded Bishop Willibald's pilgrimage the Holy Land, made between 721 and 727, stated concerning the Sheep's Gate Pool, "After performing his devotions [Willibald] went to the porch of Solomon, where is the pool where the infirm wait for the motion of the water, when the angel comes to move it; and then he who enters it is healed." *Itinerarium S. Willibaldi* 10. Latin text in Titus Tobler, ed. *Itinera Hierosolymitana et Descriptiones terrae santae* (first edition 1879, reprint Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1966) 285–97. Trans. Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine* (first published 1848, reprint New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1968) 18.

[74] Jerome, Dial. contra Luc., PL 23, col. 0161A. Bethesda lacus Judaeae, nisi per adventum Angeli, debilitata corporaliter membra sanare non poterat.

[75] John Chrysostom, *In Ioannem* 203–4; *de Christi divinitate* 803.

The *Gospel of John*'s account of the Bethesda angel provides an analogy for understanding the dedication on Lamp 1 from Corinth. The dedicator of that lamp may have heard, or read, the legend of the angel of Bethesda, which appears to have circulated in the fourth century and afterwards through pilgrims' accounts of the Holy Land, in the commentaries of the church fathers, and in the text of *John*. While the cross at the beginning of Lamp 1's inscription does not prove that the dedicator was a Christian, the cross does indicate knowledge of the symbols of Christianity, as one would expect in Corinth, where Christianity physically dominated the city in the late antique period.[76] Thus, the most Christian of the dedications from Corinth described the numinous beings dwelling at the water of the Fountain of the Lamps as *angeloi*. As Rothaus has argued, the Fountain of the Lamps was surely the site of non-Christian (and probably pre-Christian) cult activity, and the mention of nymphs on one unpublished *defixio* from the Fountain provides some idea of the type of cult practiced there.[77] However, in the fourth through sixth centuries, worshippers considered the Fountain an efficacious site to invoke *angeloi*. The most Christian of the worshippers understood those angels to dwell upon the water, in a manner analogous to, or perhaps influenced by, the Johannine account of the angel of the Bethesda pool.

Based on this analogy, the dedicator of Lamp 1, and others with similar beliefs, may have prayed to the *angeloi* upon the water in order to be cured from a disease or infirmity. As Jordan noted, the close physical proximity of the ancient Asklepieion to the Fountain of the Lamps suggests the likelihood that ritual activity at the Fountain was in search of healing. This observation suggests another similarity between Bethesda and Corinth: the probable construction of an Asklepieion at the site of the Bethesda pool in the second or third century, after the founding of Aelia Capitolina. In the case of Bethesda, the site of the pools appears to have been transformed from a largely Jewish healing site, to a pagan one, and then (in the fourth century) to a site venerated by Christians and others. In the case of the Fountain of the Lamps, the site was probably sacred to nymphs and other numinous beings associated with fountains and caves. By the fourth century, on some occasions, and by some visitors, those beings could be called *angeloi*. Circumstantial evidence suggests those *angeloi* could

[76] Rothaus (2000) 93–104.
[77] Rothuas (2000) 129–31.

be called on for healing. However, the *defixio* from the Fountain of Anna Perenna, which calls upon nymphs and *angeli* to blind an enemy should serve as a note of caution. The *angeloi* of the Fountain of the Lamps may have also been summoned for more nefarious purposes.

Chonae/Colossae

The eighth-century account of the miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae may preserve, in hagiographic form, a Christianized record of a late antique cult site similar to the Fountain of the Lamps at Corinth, the well of Abraham at Mamre, and the Bethesda Pool. The eighth-century redaction of the Miracles of St. Michael of Chonae relates that the apostles Philip and John, on a missionary journey in the region of Colossae, prophesied an epiphany of the archangel Michael.[78] Shortly after that, a healing spring appeared. The spring was associated with Michael, and the miracle story reports that the archangel healed the deaf and dumb daughter of a local pagan, who carried his daughter to the site. The site soon acquired its own local holy man, who maintained the shrine to Michael. The local pagan population, however, wished to destroy the shrine and diverted a local river in order to flood the shrine and overwhelm the spring. Such drastic measures could not intimidate the shrine's caretaker, however, who prayed for Michael to intervene. The miracle account relates that Michael responded to the drastic measures of the local pagans with equal force. Just as the diverted rivers were about to flood the shrine, the archangel forced the river to go underground through funnels and reappear on the other side of the shrine. The Greek word for funnels is *chonai*, and this story is clearly an etiology that explains the origin of the natural feature, the name of the town, and Chonae's growth and eclipse of the nearby settlement of Colossae in the early Byzantine period.[79]

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[78] M. Bonnet, ed. *Analecta Bollandiana* 8 (1889): 289–307; Bonnet dated the text between the fifth and seventh century, W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903): 465–80, noted that the toponyms employed in the text date from the eighth century (for instance, the miracles of Michael are said to take place at Chonae rather than Colossae) and argued that the text should thus date no earlier than the ninth century. But, see Peers (2001) 143, n. 41 who notes (correctly) that Ramsay's chronology implies that the text could date as early as the eighth century.

[79] Chonae is located near Colossae, but above the Lycus valley, on Mt. Cadmus. Its more defensible position appears to have been preferable in the eighth century, when sudden raids threatened the population. See Ramsay (1903) 478.

Although the oldest redaction of the Miracles of St. Michael dates to the eighth century, most scholars agree that the text reflects an earlier account, probably from the fifth century, and perhaps associated with the earliest construction of Michael shrines in the area.[80] Leaving aside the account of the miracle, the account contains many elements that reflect an eighth-century imagination rather than fifth-century reality. For instance, as Ramsay noted, inaccuracies the geographical descriptions suggest that the author of the miracle story had probably never been to Chonae.[81] But more than that, the idea that a pagan mob would destroy a healing shrine, be it Christian or otherwise, cannot be supported. Numerous accounts from the fourth-century and afterwards make it clear that the destruction of temples and shrines is a form of persecution preferred by the Christian church and empire, and not by jealous pagans.[82] The story of the angry pagan mob and Michael's creation of the funnels (*chonai*) is clearly an etiology that explains the name of the town Chonae and its eclipse of the older settlement of Colossae. The author of the tale has projected onto the pagan mob a form a religious violence better known from his own day, when Christian authorities actively sought shrines associated with traditional polytheism in order to destroy them.

However, the eighth-century account of Michael's miracle may accurately reflect some aspects of the later Roman world and the spring at Chonae. The story of the pagan man who sought a cure for his daughter at a healing spring that Christians associated with Michael the Archangel seems plausible. As demonstrated above, Sozomen's description of cult rituals at Mamre indicates that Hellenes gathered at a site that Jews and Christians believed to be sacred because of an angelic epiphany. In addition, archaeological evidence from the Fountain of the Lamps suggests that Christians and non-Christians called upon Michael and Gabriel at a fountain where they believed that *angeloi* dwelled. For the Hellene in the miracle story, the ritual efficacy of the spring and the power of the numinous being associated

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[80] Ramsay (1903) 479 suggests that the later redaction probably has at its core an earlier miracle story, composed prior to the movement of the Colossian community to Chonae.

[81] Ramsay (1903) 470.

[82] See Polymnia Athanassiadi, "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius," *JHS* 113 (1993) 13–7; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth through Eighth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 1–31.

with it mattered most. The miracle story's description of a Christian hermit who took care of the site may also reflect some kernel of truth, although the name of the ascetic is clearly taken from *Colossians*.[83] Thus, through the hazy lens of Byzantine hagiography, one may see some indication of a site similar to the Fountain of the Lamps, where pagans and Christians associated *angeloi* with a natural spring. The miracle story is also similar to that of the Bethesda pool, in that the angel associated with the spring was believed to heal the infirm. In its description of the establishment of the Michael shrine and its monastic attendant, the Miracle of Michael at Chonae also contains the story of establishing Christian authority over a site, where (it would appear) Christians and pagans both sought the aid of the Archangel. In this respect, the spring and Michael shrine at Chonae appear similar to Mamre, where pagans, Christians, and Jews gathered on account of the angelic epiphany, until—shocked by the rituals practiced there—the emperor ordered local bishops to cleanse the site and construct an edifice worthy of the catholic and apostolic church.

Conclusion

Evidence for Mamre in Judea, the Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth, the Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem, and the Fountain at Chonae in Anatolia attests that pagans, Jews, and Christians prayed to, invoked, and otherwise venerated *angeloi* at some of the same sites, occasionally at the same time, and using similar rituals. From the point of view of most religious practitioners, praying to, invoking, or venerating *angeloi* side by side with Christians, Jews, and others, appears not to have defiled the sacred character of the site or inhibited its ritual efficacy. However, during the fourth century and afterwards, Christian authorities took steps to limit the access of non-Christians to sacred sites and to supervise the worshipers who might engage in Hellenic and idolatrous rituals. Although different religious groups appear to have worshipped at sites like Mamre for some time, after the imperial recognition of Christianity, some Christians, expressed the opinion that non-Christian rituals or persons could make a site unsuitable for Christian worship. Efforts to

[83] Col. 4:17, where the author elusively states, "And say to Archippus 'see that you complete the task that you have received from the Lord'" (NRSV). See Ramsay (1903) 469.

supervise and control Mamre began under the Emperor Constantine, with the intention to insure church authority over the site and to insure that non-Christians did not defile its ritual purity. A Christian basilica marked the site of the Bethesda Pool by the fifth century, which would presumably have supervised the rituals of visitors drawn to the site of the healing pool and its attendant *angelos*. The account of the miracles at Chonae relates the establishment of Christian authority over a ritually powerful spring associated with an *angelos*, by telling the story of how a healing spring effected by the archangel Michael was protected by a Christian caretaker, then later monumentalized with a suitable Christian edifice. The Fountain of the Lamps is somewhat different, in that literary testimony describing how Christian authorities regarded the site does not exist. Archaeological evidence from the Fountain of the Lamps indicates that the site remained in use until the sixth century, and its dedications suggest that the site was popular with Christians and non-Christians. The finds and inscribed lamps from the Fountain of the Lamps demonstrate that the practice of offering lamps to *angeloi* was not limited to Mamre in Judea. The inscribed dedications from the Fountain of the Lamps, which mention *angeloi*, nymphs, and archangels, also suggest that the word *angeloi* could be one term, among several, which visitors to sacred springs could use to describe the numinous beings associated with such waters. Such a term would express the function of the sacred beings to non-Christian and Christian alike, and the polysemous nature of the word *angeloi* is no doubt one of the reasons that it was used to describe the numinous beings associated with sacred springs visited by those from multiple religious traditions.

Side A

Side B

Photos: I. Ioannidou and L. Bartzioutou. By permission of the American School of Classical Studies, Corinth Excavations, by permission. Negative numbers: 03-11-16 (Side A) and 03-11-15 (Side B).

Figure 5.1 Lamp 1

Side A

Side B

Photos: I. Ioannidou and L. Bartzioutou. By permission of the American School of Classical Studies, Corinth Excavations. Negative numbers: 03-11-11 (Side A) and 03-11-12 (Side B).

Figure 5.2 Lamp 2

CHAPTER SIX

ANGELS OF A CHRISTIAN GOD: CHRISTIAN *ANGELOS* VENERATION IN LATE ROMAN ANATOLIA

Around 425 CE, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus (ca. 393–466) composed a commentary on the *Letter to the Colossians*. Theodoret, like subsequent exegetes, found the text's warning to the Colossians against the "worship of angels" in need of elucidation, stating as follows:

> This disease remained for a long time in Phrygia and Pisidia. Indeed, because of this, a synod convened in Laodicea of Phrygia forbade by law praying to angels; and even now shrines dedicated to St. Michael are to be seen among them and those near them.[1]

Theodoret of Cyrrhus tells us that the "disease" of angel worship remained for many years in the territories of Phrygia and Pisidia, referring to the Synod of Laodicea (ca. 360) and the contemporary existence of shrines of St. Michael as proof of this. Modern scholars commenting on *angelos* veneration in southwest Anatolia have generally followed Theodoret's analysis, citing the bishop's comments as an indication of the popularity of *angelos* veneration in the region from the first through fifth centuries.[2] However, a closer examination of the evidence that Theorodet refers to, as well other period testimony, reveals a more complex picture of Christian *angelos* veneration in southwest Anatolia. The canons of the Synod of Laodicea are extant, and the prohibition

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[1] Theodoret, *Interpretatio epist. ad Coloss*. *PG* 82.613, Ἔμεινε δὲ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος ἐν τῇ Φρυγίᾳ καὶ Πισιδίᾳ μέχρι πολλοῦ. Οὗ δὴ χάριν καὶ συνελθοῦσα σύνοδος ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ τῆς Φρυγίας, νόμῳ κεκώλυκε τὸ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις προσεύχεσθαι· καὶ μέχρι δὲ τοῦ νῦν εὐκτήρια τοῦ ἁγίου Μιχαὴλ παρ' ἐκείνοις καὶ τοῖς ὁμόροις ἐκείνων ἔστιν ἰδεῖν.

[2] For example, G. Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 10–1; S. Mitchell, "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos," *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (Oxford University Press, 1999): 103; C. E. Arnold, *The Colossian syncretism: The Interface Between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996) 85–7; S. Mitchell, *Anatolia II: The Rise of the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 46. W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 7th ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903) 476–7. Ramsay adds, however, concerning the cult of Michael after Theodoret, "That which was once counted idolatry, was afterwards reckoned as piety" (p. 477).

that Theodoret refers to is in Canon 35. The wording of Canon 35 suggests that the synod's prohibition was an attempt to bring within the Church a religious practice that, if practiced outside of the Church, could challenge ecclesiastical authority. Furthermore, the appearance in southwest Anatolia (in the mid-fifth century) of shrines and basilicas dedicated to Michael represents a further stage in the process by which potentially heterodox forms of *angelos* invocation were given acceptable form. In such structures the veneration of *angeloi* could be regarded as legitimate prayer and thus support, rather than undermine, Church authority.[3]

Whereas the previous chapters have surveyed non-Christian and Christian forms of late Roman *angelos* veneration, the present chapter examines the process by which some forms of *angelos* veneration became acceptable within Christianity, while others were made illicit. The chapter focuses on Anatolia, in particular those regions identified by Theodoret as places where the "disease" of *angelos* worship was long-lived. As discussed in previous chapters, there is abundant inscriptional evidence for non-Christian *angelos* veneration in this region. In addition, there are numerous literary, inscriptional, and archaeological sources of evidence for the manner in which *angeloi* became a prominent and accepted feature of Christian worship in the region between the fourth and sixth centuries CE. The present chapter—the last in this book—will focus on the latter sources with the goal of illustrating the process by which *angelos* veneration found an acceptably Christian form in late antique Anatolia. Theorodet's comments on *angelos* worship in Anatolia, and its continuing vitality, were inspired by one of the most famous New Testament references to *angelos* worship in Anatolia: *Colossians'* prohibition of the "worship of angels." *Colossians*, today as in Theodoret's time, is often the starting point for discussions of Christian and non-Christian *angelos* veneration in Anatolia. So, let us briefly examine that text and its reception before moving on to the Synod of Laodicea and the construction of shrines dedicated to Michael the Archangel.

[3] Contrary to the opinions of some scholars, e.g. C. Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Deltion tis Christianikis Etaipeias* 12 (1984) 53; C. E. Arnold (1996) 87.

Colossians' Warning Against the "Worship of Angels"

Theodoret remarked on the continuing popularity of prayer to *angeloi* in southwest Anatolia in his explanation of *Colossians'* prohibition of the "worship of angels." While it is difficult to determine the exact form of worship *Colossians* refers to, it is clear that the author regarded the "worship of angels" to be a Jewish practice, as its admonition appears in the context of warnings against other Jewish observances.[4] *Colossians'* warning against the "worship of angels" can therefore be viewed as part of an attempt to distinguish between Jewish and Christian practices. Specifically, the author[5] of *Colossians* warned Christians against heeding those who encouraged them to take part in θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων, "the worship of angels." The warning against *angelos* worship reads as follows:

> μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶσυνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ (2:18–19).
>
> Let no one deprive you of your prize, taking pleasure in humility and worship of angels, becoming initiated into those things which he has seen, puffed-up by his mind of the flesh, and not keeping a hold of the head, out of which the whole body, supported and held together by the ligaments and sinews, grows through the increase of God (2:18–19).

Attempts to understand exactly what the author meant by "worship of angels" began in antiquity, witness Theodoret, and continue in the present. The immediate context of the phrase does not readily aid translation, as problems of interpretation arise from nearly every word and construction in Colossians 2:18.[6] The term θρησκεία, which most

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[4] For example, *Colossians* 2:14–17, warns Christians against observing dietary laws and Sabbaths, and 2:21–22, inveighs against rules prohibiting the touching and eating of certain things.

[5] Authorship of the epistle is currently a matter of debate among New Testament scholars, see M. Barth and H. Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. A. B. Beck (New York: Anchor Bible/Doubleday, 1994) 114–34, for a detailed survey of the debates concerning the authorship and date of *Colossians*.

[6] Thus, F. O. Francis, "Humility and Angel Worship in Col. 2:18," in *Conflict at Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Selected Modern Studies* ed. F. O. Francis and W. A. Meeks (Missoula: Society for Biblical Literature, 1975) 163. Reprinted from *Studia Theologica* 16 (1963) 109–34. Francis

English translations render as "worship" can also mean "religion," "cult" or "system of worship."[7] The genitive τῶν ἀγγέλων can be translated in several different ways as well. Most translators read τῶν ἀγγέλων as an objective genitive, thus meaning "worship directed at angels."[8] However others have argued that τῶν ἀγγέλων is a subjective genitive, meaning "worship that the angels practice."[9]

Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185–ca. 255), in one of the earliest recorded comments on *Col*. 2:18, suggested another meaning for the genitive, remarking in his commentary on the *Song of Songs* as follows:

> Therefore it is these imitations of gold [i.e. of the new covenant] that the friends of the bridegroom, clearly the angels and prophets, gave to the Church, the bride; the angels and the prophets who served her in the Law and other mysteries. This is, in my opinion, what Paul means when he states: "worship of the angels which some enter into blindly, puffed up by their mere human minds." Therefore, the entire cult and religion of the Jews are imitations of gold. When someone turns to the Lord and the veil is lifted from him, he sees true gold.[10]

Jean Daniélou remarked concerning this passage that for Origen the "worship of angels" was equated with Judaism itself.[11] As Daniélou has demonstrated, Origen's interpretation is based on the tradition that

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states concerning Col. 2:18, "While textual problems are minimal, lexical syntactical, and historical problems abound. The interpretation of nearly every word or phrase has been disputed."

[7] Bauer, s.v. θρησκεία.

[8] See Arnold (1996) 61–102 for discussion. Arnold argues, chiefly on the basis of archaeological evidence, that pagan angel worshippers were influencing Christian practice at Colossae. Arnold's point that there was a pagan tradition of angel veneration in southwestern Anatolia is supported by a variety of sources. However, as discussed in the present volume, the archaeological evidence for pagan angel veneration in southwest Anatolia dates to at least century after the letter to the Colossians.

[9] E.g. Francis (1975) 176–81. Bauer, s.v. θρησκεία, notes that the deity worshipped typically takes the objective genitive. Bauer cites Col. 2:18 as an example of such an objective genitive. Bauer notes the popularity of angel veneration in southwestern Anatolia as one of the reasons to read the phrase as "worship directed at angels." Examples of subjective genitive cited by Bauer include Jos., *Ant. Iud*. 12.253, θρησκεία Ἰουδαίων.

[10] *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles* 2.8.20: Istas ergo similitudines auri fecerunt sponsae ecclesiae amici sponsi, angeli videlicet et prophetae, ministraverunt in lege ceterisque mysteriis. Haec, opinor, et Paulus intelligens dicebat: In religione angelorum, in his quae videt, frustra inflatus a sensu carnis suae. Rufinus's Latin text from *Origène: Commentaire sur le cantique des cantiques* I (Livres I–II) ed. Luc Brésard and Henri Crouzel. (Paris: Les editions du cerf, 1991) 418.

[11] J. Daniélou, *Les anges et leur mission* (Paris: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953) 22–3.

the Law of Moses was delivered to men through angels.[12] As Daniélou indicated, Paul alludes to this belief in *Galatians*, which asks, "Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom a promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator."[13] As Daniélou has also indicated, the most illustrative reference to this belief in Hellenistic Judaism appears in the Septuagint text of *Deuteronomy*, where Moses includes with his blessing of the Israelites the following words, "The Lord came out of Sinai and appeared to us out of Seir, and hastened out of the mountains of Pharan, with myriads out of Kadesh, at his right hand were his angels."[14] The belief that angels took part in the delivery of the law to Moses is expounded further in the extra-canonical *Jubilees*, where God commands the "angel of the presence" to write the history of the world from its creation to the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. In *Jubilees* laws pertaining to the Passover and Sabbath were part of the history delivered by the "angel of the presence."[15] In addition, Josephus acknowledges this tradition when he states that the Jews learned the holiest of laws through the agency of angels.[16]

Thus, the author of *Colossians* may have intended to warn readers away from a form of worship either associated with *angeloi* or believed to have been delivered by *angeloi.* However, Theodoret appears not to have understood the text that way. In addition, his statements concerning the possibility of inappropriate *angelos* veneration follow a Christian tradition articulated in *Revelation*. That book contains a warning for those whose high regard for *angeloi* led them to worship the messengers of God. John in *Revelation* describes his encounter with the *angelos*:

> I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed [the things to come] to me, but he said to me, you must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"[17]

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[12] Daniélou (1953) 12–23.
[13] Daniélou (1953) 12–23; Galatians 3:19.
[14] Deuteronomy 33:2, LXX. Translation mine. Daniélou (1953) 15.
[15] Angel of the presence given the command, Jubilees 1:27–28. Laws of Sabbath, 2:17–33 and 50:1–13. Laws of the Passover, 49:1–23.
[16] Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, 15.5.3.
[17] *Revelation* 22:8 (trans. NRSV).

John's description of his *angelos* veneration (and the subsequent rebuke) suggests one method of reconciling Origen's and Theodoret's interpretations of *Colossians* 2:18. John's reaction to the *angelos* in *Revelation* is indicative of the high regard that pious Christians (and Jews) held for God's *angeloi* and the manner in which such high regard could transform itself into worship. John's record of the rebuke he received from the angel would presumably serve as a warning to other Christians who might likewise be temped to worship *angeloi*. John's error in *Revelation* serves an example of the "worship of angels" that *Colossians* was warning against. Whether we take the phrase to mean "worship directed at angels," "worship that the angels take part in," or "a form of religion delivered by the angels," *Colossians* is warning the Christians against undue regard for the *angeloi* of God that could lead to veneration that *Colossians* states should be directed toward Christ.

Theodoret's statement suggests that *angeloi* remained objects of veneration in southwest Asia Minor despite *Colossians'* warning, and Theodoret understood the ban on *angelos* invocation by the Synod of Laodicea to indicate the persistence of *angelos* worship in the region. However, the canons of Laodicea suggest that the synod was not concerned with *angelos* worship in its entirety, as Theodoret implies. Rather, the fourth-century synod was concerned with forms of *angelos* invocation that occurred outside of the church, in secret, and in groups. Laodicea's reaction to individuals invoking *angeloi* reveals the process by which Christian authorities banned potentially heterodox forms of *angelos* invocation that could be practiced in secret while providing a place for *angeloi* within orthodox prayer and liturgy.

The Synod of Laodicea and the Prohibition of Angelos *Invocation*

Laodicea ad Lycum rests approximately twenty kilometers from ancient Colossae, not far from Hierapolis.[18] The author of *Colossians* suggests that Laodicea and Colossae had close ties when he requests that the Colossians share his letter with the church at Laodicea, a request that indicates the "worship of angels" could be found there as well.[19] Approximately three hundred years after the composition of *Colossians*,

[18] Laodicea ad Lycum, "on the Lycus River." Not to be confused with Laodicea Cumbusta and Laodicea Katakekoumene, "of the burned lands."

[19] Col. 4:15–17.

the Synod of Laodicea met to address, among other issues, the invocation of *angeloi* outside of the church.[20] Canon 35, which bans extra-ecclesiastical angel invocation and Canon 36, which bans the creation and use of phylactery amulets, are the most pertinent to this study. They read as follows:

> Canon 35: Ὅτι οὐ χριστιανοὺς ἐγκαταλείπειν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἀπιέναι, καὶ ἀγγέλους ὀνομάζειν, καὶ συνάξεις ποιεῖν, ἅπερ ἀπηγόρευεται. Εἴ τις οὖν εὑρεθῇ ταύτῃ τῇ κεκρυμένῃ εἰδολατρείᾳ σχολάζων, ἔστω ἀνάθεμα, ὅτι ἐγκατέλειπε τόν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, τὸν Υἱόν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ εἰδολατρίᾳ προσῆλθεν.[21]
>
> Canon 35: It is forbidden for Christians to abandon the Church of God, and to depart, invoke angels, and hold gatherings. Therefore, if someone should be discovered taking part in this secret idolatry, let him be anathema, because he has abandoned our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and entered into idolatry.
>
> Canon 36: Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ἱερατικοὺς ἢ κληρικοὺς, μάγους ἢ ἐπαοιδοὺς εἶναι, ἢ μαθηματικοὺς ἢ ἀστραλόγους, ἢ ποιεῖν τὰ λεγόμενα φυλακτήρια, ἅτινά ἐστι δεσμωτήρια τῶν ψυχῶν αυτῶν. τοὺς δὲ φοροῦντας ῥίπτεσθαι ἐκ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκελεύσαμεν.
>
> Canon 36: Priests and clerics shall not be magicians or enchanters, nor fortune-tellers nor astrologers, neither shall they make so-called "phylacteries," which are prisons for their souls. We command that those wearing them be cast out of the Church.[22]

Several scholars have suggested that the Synod of Laodicea's legislation against angel invocation indicates that *Colossians'* warning had little effect on religious practice.[23] However, such generalizations ignore the differences between the specific practices of *angelos* invocation banned at Laodicea and the more general "worship of angels" prohibited in *Colossians*. Whereas *Colossians* speaks against the "worship of angels" in its entirety, the reaction of the fourth-century Synod of Laodicea was to prohibit Christians from invoking *angeloi* (literally, calling *angeloi* by

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[20] M. Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study in the Relationship between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135–425)*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 323–28, examines several canons of the Synod of Laodicea as evidence of the fourth century Christian reaction against Jewish rituals.

[21] Greek text after C. J. Hefele, *Histoire des Consiles*, Vol. 1, part 2 (Paris: Letouzet et Ané, 1907) 1017–8.

[22] Cf. Deut. 18:10–12.

[23] Most recently, Peers (2001) 9–10; following Theodoret's statements: Mitchell (1999) 103.

name) apart from the Church while implicitly allowing other forms of *angelos* invocation. In addition, the Synod prohibited Christians from "forming assemblies" (συνάξεις ποιεῖν) while apart from the Church and invoking *angeloi*. Thus, Canon 35 reveals that the fourth-century Synod reacted against not only the practice of invoking *angeloi*, which could be practiced by individuals, but also against the potential of multiple Christians to gather together to invoke *angeloi*, away from the Church, which would presumably undermine ecclesiatical authority.

The Synod of Laodicea's warning against angel invocation appears in the context of anathemas against magical rituals that Christians and pagans frequently associated with Judaism, correctly or not. On the surface, this bears a similarity to *Colossian*'s attempt to distinguish between Christian and Jewish rituals. However, while Laodicea's ban on angel invocation appears to be part of a broad attempt to prohibited Christians from taking part in Jewish ritual, it should be noted that Laodicea's ban designated angel invocation as a "secret idolatry" rather than Judaizing (ἰουδαΐζειν), a designation Laodicea articulated in the case of Sabbath observances.[24] The absence of the term ἰουδαΐζειν does not necessarilydiscredit the view of M. Simon, that Canon 35 was aimed at practices believed to be Jewish, as several other canons from Laodicea that target Jewish practices do not employ the term.[25]

In addition, there is some evidence for the popular association of *angelos* veneration with Judaism. For example, Origen's *Contra Celsum*, a work written in defense of Christianity against the attacks of the pagan Celsus, quotes Celsus as stating, "[the Jews] worship angels and are addicted to sorcery of which Moses was their teacher."[26] Notably, Origen takes issue with Celsus' assertion, and counters that Celsus misunderstands Judaism and that Moses never instructed the Hebrews

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[24] Synod of Laodicea, Canon 29. Hefele (1909) 1015. M. Simon (1986) 306–38 offers a survey of the evidence that the fourth-century Church actively attempted to distinguish Christian and Jewish rituals. Simon's survey also demonstrates that Christians in Asia Minor, much to the chagrin of bishops such as John Chrysostom, continued to take part in Jewish rituals and holidays.

[25] M. Simon (1986) 323. Other canons that legislate against Jewish practices include: Canon 16, which stipulates that the Gospels should be read on Saturday, which presumably would prevent Christian congregations from following the custom of reading the Old Testament on Saturday; Canon 38 states that no one should accept unleavened bread from the Jews, nor should they take part in their impiety (ἀσεβεία).

[26] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.26, trans, H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) 26–7. The *Contra Celsum* should be dated ca. 247–8 (Chadwick, pp. xiv–xv). The date of Celsus' work is most likely 177–180 CE (Chadwick, pp. xxiv–xxix).

to worship angels. Origen refutes a similar statement by Celsus later in the same work, quoting Celsus as having stated, "The first thing about the Jews that may well cause amazement is that although they worship the heaven and the angels in it, yet they reject its most sacred and powerful parts, the sun, moon, and the other starts…"[27] Origen replies that Celsus based his remarks upon hearsay without really understanding Judaism or Jewish monotheism. For Origen this implied that Celsus did not understand Christianity either, one of his primary points in his reply to Celsus' anti-Christian polemic. Although Origen is correct in his assertion that the worship of angels is contrary to the Mosaic law, Celsus' belief that Jews worshipped angels and practiced sorcery reveals the way that an educated Roman philosopher understood Judaism. Origen's assertion that Celsus' remarks were based on hearsay indicates that the association of Judaism with angel veneration and sorcery was not only Celsus' but a popular perception among other (second century) pagans as well.

While Origen defends Judaism from the accusation of angel worship, other Christians were more ready to believe such charges. Clement of Alexandria, quotes a passage from the *Preaching of Peter* which states, "Neither worship as the Jews; for they, thinking that they only know God, do not know Him, adoring as they do angels and archangels, the month and the moon."[28] These statements indicate that Christians and pagans perceived that Jews worshipped or venerated angels excessively. Although the Synod of Laodicea does not label angel invocation as a Jewish practice, literary testimony suggests that angel invocation (as a form of angel worship or veneration) was associated with Judaism. Thus, we may, with Marcel Simon, understand Laodicea's prohibition of *angelos* invocation as an attempt to curtail a ritual practice associated with Judaism, as well as one that could be associated with pagan practices, such as those examined in the preceding chapters.

However, the designation of angel invocation as a "secret idolatry" suggests that the Synod primarily viewed angel invocation as a ritual associated with Greco-Roman religion.[29] In addition, the Synod's

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[27] Ibid. 5.6. Trans. Chadwick (1953) 267–8.

[28] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.5, trans. W. L. Alexander, *ANCF* Vol. 2, p. 489. See also, D. Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton University Press, 1999) 22–6.

[29] G. Peers (2001) 10–1; 69–70, suggests that εἰδολατρεία here refers to the veneration of angel images. However, as the canon prohibits "angel invocation" rather than image veneration, we should understand εἰδολατρεία to refer more generally to the worship of false gods rather than to the improper veneration of angel images per se.

prohibition of "forming groups" outside of the church suggests that the reasons for the prohibition may be more complex than an attempt to distinguish between Christian and Jewish practice. As discussed in previous chapters, numerous pagan dedications to angels from southwest Anatolia indicate the popularity of angel invocation and veneration in the region. One should especially note the third-century dedication to Hosios and Dikaios from the "Society of the Friends of Angels" discussed in Chapter 3. Although Canon 35 is not directed at this group specifically, such a society would certainly fall under the Synod's anathema.

Secret Idolatry—Amuletic Forms of Angelos *Invocation*

Angelos invocations from late Roman Anatolia, and other areas of the Mediterranean, inscribed on amulets, lamellae, and stone, as well as *angelos* invocations recorded in the Greek Magical Papyri, display Christian, Jewish, Gnostic, and polytheistic names and ritual formulas.[30] The inclusion of Gnostic deities and names recognizable from the Greco-Roman pantheon is perhaps one reason that the Synod of Laodicea branded *angelos* invocation an "idolatrous" practice. *Angelos* invocations frequently appear on amulets and similar artifacts that could be worn discretely, and that is perhaps one reason that the Synod described *angelos* invocation as a "secret idolatry."[31] With such objects,

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The language and context of Canon 35 suggests that the Synod was concerned with separating Christian ritual from Jewish and pagan practices, as well as the prohibition of illicit groups of extra-ecclesiastical angel invocators. However, the Canon is not specific about what types of angel invocation inspired the prohibition. The Synod dubs angel invocation a "secret idolatry," but does not specify how angel invocation is "secret" nor how it is "idolatrous." As stated above, the examples of pagan angel veneration examined in previous chapters suggest why the Synod might consider angel invocation idolatrous. However, examples of angel invocation from Anatolia that are closer in date to the Synod may shed additional light on what inspired the Synod's prohibition.

[30] For third-century amulets that combine archangel invocations with Egyptian, Greek, and Gnostic deities, see S. Michel, *Die Magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 2 vols. (London: British Museum Press, 2001) nos. 41, 46, 47, 103, 130, 215, 243, 273, 288, 289, 424. For fourth and fifth-century amulets with archangel invocations without explicit Greek or Egyptian names or images, Michel (2001) nos. 445, 451, 452, 465, 468, 521, 527. Angel invocations in the magical papyri: e.g. *PGM* IV. 1930–1950, a prayer to Helios and his Holy Angels; IV. 2695–2704, a prayer for protection from angels; and XXXVI.161–176, an invocation of named angels for protection.

[31] Outside of Asia Minor, curse tablets that invoke *angeloi*, nymphs and chthonic deities, such as that from the *Fons Annae Perennae* at Rome, are also suggestive of

Anatolian Christians would typically invoke *angeloi* apart from the eyes from the clergy, thus making the practice "secret." In addition, as the following examples illustrate, the appearance of invocations of *angeloi* on amulets and lamellae helps to explain why the Synod of Laodicea followed its ban on *angelos* invocation in Canon 35 with a ban on the making and wearing of protective amulets in Canon 36, as such items were one means of extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation.

The following examples are characteristic of private *angelos* invocations found on amulets and lamellae from about the third through fifth centuries CE. The inscribed invocations below illustrate both the syncretistic manner in which late-antique *angelos* invocations combined ritual elements from Judaism, Christianity, and traditional polytheistic religions. Furthermore, the manner in which inscribed *angelos* invocations were produced and used reveals several potential reasons why extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation was a threat to clerical authority, and why the Synod of Laodicea took steps to prohibit *angelos* invocation outside of the church while at the same time implicitly allowing other forms of *angelos* veneration.

Our first example of *angelos* invocation dates to the fourth or fifth century, when a certain Epiphanius called for divine aid by means of a phylactery lamella (Figure 6.1). Archaeologists discovered Epiphanius's lamella near a sarcophagus in the Lycian city of Xanthos (southwest Asia Minor). The invocation on the more legible portion of lamella begins with an inscribed cross and reads as follows:

> +K(ύρι)ε, βοηθί το φ/ορῶντι, ὅν ἔτεκε / Ἀναστασίαν, Ἐπυφά/νιον· ὁρκίζω / ὑμᾶς, Σολομῶνα, / τὸν μέγα ἄγγελον Μί/χαηλ, Γαβριήλ Οὐ/ριήλ, Ῥαφαὴλ· ὁρκί/ζω ὑμᾶς Ἀβραξα{α}. Ὁ/ρκίζω ὑμᾶς ἁβραι/στὶ θαωβαραω Σ/αβαωθ Ἐπιφάνιον / ΑΡ / Ιαω Ιαω / νωειθω…[32]

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the secretive nature of some rituals of *angelos* invocation. See J. Blänsdorf, "The Texts from the *Fons Annae Perennae*," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West*, R. L. Gordon and F. M. Simón, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 221–7, for discussion of the Anna Perenna *angelos* invocation and parallels. See pp. 118–125 for discussion of *angelos* dedications at the Fountain of the Lamps at Corinth.

[32] Text after D. Jordan and R. Kotansky, "Two Phylacteries from Xanthos," *Révue archéologique* (1996) 167–74, who note concerning the 'Hebrew' θαωβαραω, that "it is obviously more effective to adjure the deity in his native tongue" (169–70). Jordan and Kotansky note that θαωβαραω is probably a corruption of the vocable θωβαρραβαυ or -βωθ, common in magical texts," which is perhaps derived from the Semitic mercantile expression *tob 'arba*, '(the) surety (or down-payment) (is) good" (170). The inscription on the back of the phylactery is less legible but appears to invoke Abraham and Adonai, in addition. Cf. *SEG* 46.1726 II. The phylactery was a surface find,

> +Lord, help the bearer [of this tablet] Epiphanius, whom Anastasia bore. I adjure you Solomon, the great Angel Michael, Gabriel, Ouriel, Raphael. I adjure you Abrasax. I adjure you in Hebrew: thaobarao Sabaoth, Epiphanius … Iao … Iao … noeitho …

The invocation asks for help but is not more specific. For the sake of ritual efficacy, the text combines a Christian opening invocation, the names of four archangels and Solomon, as well as the name "Abrasax," known from Gnostic texts. The less legible portion of the text (not transcribed above) also calls upon Abraham.

A phylactery like Epiphanius' was one means of extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation. If this is the sort of invocation the Synod of Laodicea was referring to, its text reveals some of the reasons that the Synod would ban such invocations. The phylactery combines recognizable Christian symbols and a Christian ritual formula with self-consciously Jewish ritual invocations and an adjuration of the Gnostic deity "Abrasax."

A Christian ritual formula found in other inscriptions, Κύριε βοηθί preceded by an inscribed cross, begins the invocation. A well-known example of this formula appears in Christian graffiti from nearby Aphrodisias, where Κύριε βοηθί is combined with either the cross or the chi-rho.[33] However, unlike the graffiti from Aphrodisias, Epiphanius' lamella combines this Christian phrase with the invocation of four archangels, Solomon, and the Gnostic deity Abrasax.[34] Additionally, "in Hebrew" Epiphanius invokes "Sabaoth," one of the epithets of Yahweh, as the Lord "of hosts," Yahweh's title as the leader of myriads of angels.[35] Although appearing on some Christian and syncretistic

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discovered in front of the Hellenistic sarcophagus of Ahqaddi, see P. Demargne, "Tombes-maisons, tombes rupestres et sarcophages," *Feuilles de Xanthos* 5 (Paris; Institut français d'archéologie, 1974) 105–7, S3.

[33] E.g Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1989): nos. 134 and 137; pp. 182–4.

[34] Abrasax, whose name could also be spelled Abraxas, appears in numerous magical texts and in Gnostic literature. For his appearance in Greek Magical Papyri, see *PGM* IV.331–332; VIII. 49, 611; XIII.156, 466. On amulets, see C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets: Chiefly Greco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950) 162–3. More generally, Marcel Le Glay, "Abrasax," *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, Vol I/2 (Zurich: Artemis, 1981) 2–7, pls. 1–63. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Pan.* Book 1, II.25.1–6, states that in Basilides' system, the name Abrasax was given to the first principle and power. Epiphanius states that the name "Abrasax" is derived from 365, the number of days in the complete solar year.

[35] Although originally a descriptive title of Yahweh, in later Roman magical texts Sabaoth is used as an independent name, as for example in the Apocryphon of John, 11:30–35. On amulets, see Bonner (1950) 170.

Fig. 2

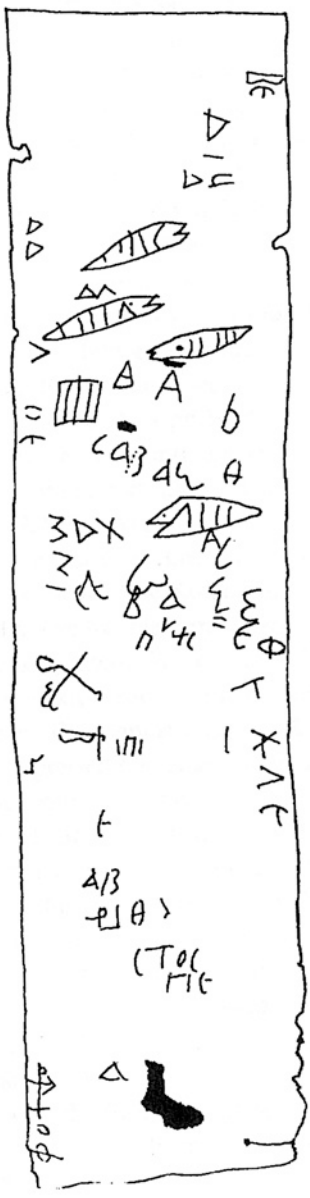

Fig. 3

Figure 6.1 Epiphanius's Phylactery. After Jordan and Kotansky (1996) 169, figs 2 and 3, by permission of the Presses Universitaires de France.

protective amulets, invocations of Solomon are characteristic of Jewish amulets from the later Roman period.[36]

The amulet calls upon *angeloi* by name (ἀγγέλους ὀνομάζειν), which Laodicea prohibited, but is also calls upon Christ, uses "Hebrew" terms, and calls upon Gnostic figures like Abrasax. It seems very likely that an amulet such as this must have been, in part, what the synod feared from extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation. Epiphanius's phylactery displays the manner in which *angelos* invocations could combine Christian ritual formulae with "Jewish" (the invocation "in Hebrew") and Gnostic (the invocation of Abrasax) divine names and invocations. Thus, it is possible that one reason that the synod prohibited Christians from going away from the church and invoking *angeloi* was that such invocations contained ritual elements perceived to be Gnostic, Jewish, or both. As for the charge of "idolatry," Abraxas was not accepted within normative Judaism or Christianity, therefore his invocation would fall under the category of idolatry, the worship of false gods.

While worn by Epiphanius, this lamella would continually work its power through the silent invocation of God, *angeloi*, patriarchs, and Abrasax. An image on the phylactery aids our understanding of how it was perceived to work. A figure with hands raised occupies a central position. Jordan and Kotansky suggested that the figure is Epiphanius, while presenting an alternate interpretation that the figure is Solomon, who appears on many magical amulets and lamellae.[37] However, as Jordan and Kotansky indicate, the name "Epiphanius" appears next to the inscribed figure, in a location where it does not make sense as part of the invocation. Therefore the former hypothesis is the most likely.

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[36] See, E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. 2 (New York: Panthenon Books, 1953) 227–35. Goodenough notes the popularity of Solomon on Jewish amulets and charms, as well as commenting on the difficulty of distinguishing between "Jewish," "Christian," and "pagan" on such objects. Solomon was invoked because of his legendary power over demons and angels as detailed in the *Testament of Solomon*.

[37] Jordan and Kostansky (1996) 170. Jordan and Kotansky note that the gesture of upraised hands is often associated with the "unjustly dead" and "prayers to the sun for vengeance." Jordan and Kotansky are very thorough in their comparisons. However, a better comparison is the figure of the orant which appears in art of the period, such as the depiction of the three young men in the fiery furnace depicted on a silver casket found near Thessaloniki, Marie Panayotidi and André Grabar, "Un reliquaire paléochrétien récemment découvert près de Thessaloniki," *CA* 24 (1975) 33–42. Photo at Thomas F. Matthews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 79.

Thus, in the center of the invocation we see Epiphanius raising his hands as an orant, delivering his prayer and adjuration. The invocation was perhaps read aloud before being rolled up and worn, but forever after the image and the text silently spoke Epiphanius's invocation, seeking the aid of God and his *angeloi.*[38]

There are reasons to suppose that Epiphanius would have considered himself a Christian. The name Epiphanius is common among Christians, and his mother has a Christian name. Additionally, the fish on the back of the lamella may have been included because of the symbol's popularity among Christians,[39] and Epiphanius prayer opens with a cross and Christian invocation. It is possible therefore that Epiphanius' lamella illustrates precisely the sort of *angelos* invocation the Synod of Laodicea legislated against. He, as a Christian, called upon *angeloi* by name by means of an inscribed lamella he would have worn on his person. Epiphanius invoked *angeloi* apart from the church by means of a phylactery lamella because he believed that it would work. For him, as well as others who invoked *angeloi*, it was not a matter of orthodoxy, but of ritual efficacy. This is just one of numerous examples of *angelos* invocations on protective amulets that demonstrate that the practice of invoking *angeloi* was widespread in Anatolia and other areas of the eastern Mediterranean.[40] By prohibiting Christians from departing from the church and invoking *angeloi*, the Synod of Laodicea was attempting to bring the popular and potentially heterodox practice of *angelos* invocation out of secrecy, and into the church where it could support, rather than challenge, clerical authority.

Archaeologists discovered an amulet with an apotrapaic function comparable to Epiphanius' lamella at the Roman cemetery at Bulgarköy, near ancient Cyzicus in Asia Minor (Figure 6.2). A. Sorlin Dorigny dated the amulet to the late-third century.[41]

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[38] For a functional analysis of narratives on late-antique and early-Byzantine amulets, see J. Tuerk, "How to do Things with Words and Images in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," (Ph.D. Thesis: University of Chicago, 2002).

[39] Jordan and Kostansky (1996) 162.

[40] For example: Bonner (1950) nos. 41 and 172; Ph. Delatte and A. Derchaine, *Les intailles magiques Gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1964) nos. 142 and 362; R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, and Bronze Lamellae.* Part I: Published Texts of Known Provenance (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994) nos. 26, 33, 35, 38, 39, 41, 48, 52.

[41] A. Sorlin Dorigny, "Phylactère Alexandrin," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 4 (1891) 287–96. Cf. C. E. Arnold (1996) 64–6; Cf. P. S. Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," in *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* 2nd ed. Vol. 3.1

Figure 6.2 Amulet from Cyzicus. After A. Sorlin Dorigny (1891) 287

The inscription on the amulet reads:

Obverse, Along Edge:
Μιχαήλ, Γαβριήλ, Οὐριήλ, Ῥαφαήλ διαφύλαξον τὸν φοροῦντα
Michael, Gabriel, Ouriel, Raphael, guard the bearer [of this amulet]
Obverse, Among Images
Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος
IIIIII RPSS
Holy, Holy, Holy
PIPI RPSS
Reverse, Along Edge:
Ἄγγελος Ἀρααφ, φεῦγε μιμισμένη Σολομῶν σε διώκει
Angel Araaph! Flee hated one! Solomon pursues you![42]

While it is impossible to determine the religion of the "bearer," the images on the amulet appear to be Jewish with some polytheistic ele-

(1986) 337; E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. 2: The Archaeological Evidence from the Diaspora (Bollingen Series 37; New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1953) 229–30 (Fig. 1052).

[42] I know of no other occurrences of the demon "Araaph." However, the name evokes an episode in the *Testament of Solomon* 11:1–4, where Solomon interrogates a demon who claims to prevent the ill from the recovery. When Solomon demands to know the demon's name, the demon replies: Λεοντοφόρον, Ἄραψ τῷ γένει. D. C. Duling, in J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York, 1983), 937, translates the phrase as "The Lion-Shaped Demon- an Arab by descent," but notes that Araps may also be a name. If other readers in late antiquity understood "Araps" to be a name, then it may explain the appearance of the similarly-named "Araaph" on an amulet that calls upon Solomon and depicts a lion.

ments. The inscription appears to be wholly Jewish, or at least there is nothing uniquely Christian or pagan about the inscription. One side of amulet depicts what appear to be Solar and Lunar deities, and the reverse depicts "Holy Rider," most likely Solomon, led by an angel, slaying a female demon.[43] The amulet invokes four archangels by name for protection. The trisagion (Holy, Holy, Holy), which follows the invocation of the archangels, is the chant that the seraphim sing to God in Isaiah's vision of God's throne.[44] Thus, the second line is related to the opening invocation of the archangels. The third line is more difficult to interpret. While the letters RPSS remain a mystery, the letters IIIIII are probably an approximation of appearance of the ineffable Hebrew tetragrammaton using Greek characters.[45] Interestingly, the amulet uses the word *angelos* to describe a demonic figure, Araph, indicating that in this era the term *angelos* could be used to describe both good and evil intermediary divinities.

The amulet above invokes *angeloi* by name, the ritual prohibited by the Synod of Laodicea. There is no indication that a Christian, the primary concern of Laodicea, wore the amulet. However, several features of the amulet are indicative of what concerned the Synod of Laodicea. The amulet displays images and invocations of *angeloi* believed to be ritually powerful. Such non-ecclesiastical ritual power was a threat to Church authority over access to the divine. In addition, the amulet and its invocation display several potentially Jewish features, such as the invocation of Solomon and the imitation of the Hebrew tetragrammaton. The combination of potentially Jewish features in *angelos* invocations could be one of the reasons that the Synod of Laodicea prohibited the invocation of *angeloi*.

Priests, Magicians and Synod of Laodicea Canon 36

There is, however, more to Laodicea's prohibitions against extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation. At Laodicea, the Church was attempting to regulate the manner in which Christians invoked *angeloi*. Based on the examples in this (and previous chapters), the invocation of *angeloi* would appear to have depended upon a person of some authority

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[43] For the Solomon/ Holy Rider figure and amulets with a predominantly Jewish character, see E. R. Goodenough (1953) 227–35; cf. C. Bonner (1950) 216–21.

[44] Isaiah 6:3, LXX: ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, κύριος σαβαοθ.

[45] Sorigny (1891) 291.

to craft amulets or votives, or to provide guidance in the proper manner of invocation. This aspect of *angelos* invocation becomes clearer when we consider how one (such as Epiphanius) would procure a phylactery. This means of procurement is suggested in Canon 36 of Laodicea, which banned the wearing of phylacteries (such as the ones we have examined) and prohibited priests from making them, identifying the crafting of amulets with the practices of "magicians," "conjurers," "astrologers," and "fortune-tellers."[46] It is difficult to define any one of these terms empirically. However, both Christians and non-Christians used these terms to describe religious practices perceived as illicit and un-orthodox. A word like "magician" served to categorize religious practices that were perceived as dangerous to religious and secular authority by nature of their non-traditional approach to the divine.[47]

The prohibition of the clergy from engraving phylactery amulets suggests that some of the clergy were probably doing just that. The synod associated amulet making with "magic" in order to discredit the practice. Canon 36 was intended to keep priests from making amulets and becoming "magicians" in order to separate legitimate and illegitimate sources of religious power. In addition, many phylactery amulets and lamellae could have come from persons outside of the clergy, those the Church would call "magicians" or "soothsayers" for the very reason that their spiritual authority threatened Christianity's. Morton Smith, Hans Dieter Betz, and Fritz Graf have given us a picture of the "magician" in the Roman period.[48] Often liminal figures, these men and women possessed a knowledge of rituals that promised protection or help to those in need.

It was perhaps to such a liminal figure that Epiphanius went to have his phylactery lamella made. However, it seems quite possible, and in fact Canon 36 of Laodicea suggests, that Epiphanius could have procured his amulet from a Christian authority, such as a priest. Recent studies have examined the roles of local priests and monks, in

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[46] …μάγους ἢ ἐπαοιδοὺς εἶναι, ἤ μαθηματικοὺς ἢ ἀστραλόγους.

[47] H. Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristics Foundation, 1983) 48–72; F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient Word* (Cambridge: Harvard Univerisity Press, 1997) 20–60; N. Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, Christians* (London: Routledge, 2001) 9–20.

[48] F. Graf (1997) 89–117; Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) xlvi–xlvii; M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978) 91–3.

addition to itinerant authorities, in the production of such objects.[49] Indeed, if priests were not in the habit of making such phylacteries, it would make little sense for the Synod of Laodicea to ban them from the practice. For Epiphanius the choice would not have been between Christian and non-Christian ritual, or even between orthodox and non-orthodox ritual. Simply put: it was a matter of ritual efficacy. Epiphanius, therefore, turned to a man or woman who specialized in the composition of ritual invocations and who had a reputation for composing prayers and invocations that succeeded. Successful "magicians" were those who knew which deities and *angeloi* to call upon for a specific purpose, and Epiphanius sought out such a person in order to secure divine aid. In some cases, such an authority could be a Christian one.

Epiphanius' phylactery reveals the way in which private, phylactery *angelos* invocations could constitute part of fourth-century Christian life, and it reveals some of the reasons Laodicea could have considered *angelos* invocation a "secret idolatry." Moreover, Canon 36 suggests that Christian clerics could have been involved in facilitating this form of phylactery *angelos* invocation. Laodicea's prohibition of extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation and its prohibition of priests crafting phylacteries indicate that the synod was attempting to distinguish between forms of *angelos* invocation it viewed as a "secret idolatry" and those it found to be acceptable. Its prohibition of Christians from gathering outside of the church to invoke *angeloi* in secret and its prohibition of clergy from making one of the technologies that could assist such invocation was part of that process.

Liturgical Invocation

Laodicea's prohibition of *angelos* invocation and its prohibition of the making and wearing of phylacteries reveal some of the ways that Christian authorities defined unacceptable forms of *angelos* invocation

[49] D. Frankfurter, "Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, P. Mirecki and M. Meyer, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 167–70 and "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt," *JECS* 11 (2003) 378–80; M. Meyer and R. Smith, eds. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994) 259–62, which comments upon the connection of the scribal tradition of Coptic monasteries and the Egyptian temple scriptoria; For the role of clergy in charm production in Anglo-Saxon England, K. Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 115–23 et *passim*.

and veneration. However, the belief in, and stories about, *angeloi* were a part of the Christian tradition. Implicit in the canons of Laodidea is that some forms of *angelos* invocation and veneration could be acceptable—specifically those that did not require Christians to form secret groups apart from the church. Fourth and fifth-century references to *angelos* invocation in the liturgy provide some idea of what Christian authorities would have allowed.

Evidence for the early liturgy is incomplete, but references in John Chrysostom's sermons to liturgical practices indicate that catechumens were instructed to pray for the "angel of peace" before departing from the church. As John stated in Antioch in the year 392/3 concerning the litany of the catechumens,

> Just as we ourselves first instruct children, even as we order them to speak loud and clear, saying: "Catechumens, ask for the angel of peace."[50]

John provides us with an explanation of the prayer for the "angel of peace" in a second homily delivered in Constantinople in 399, where he states the following:

> Every one of the faithful has an angel. Even as each just man, from the beginning, has an angel. Just as Jacob said: "The angel reared me, and delivered me from my youth." And so if we have angels, we ought to behave decently, as if some teacher were with us, for a demon is also there. On account of this we pray and we speak, asking for the angel of peace, and we ask for peace everywhere.[51]

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[50] *Homily 2 on II Corinthians*, 2.8; *PG* 61. 403. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἡμεῖς λέγομεν, τὰ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρέπομεν, ἤδη τὰς θύρας αὐτοῖς ἀνοίγοντες τοῦ αἰτεῖν· καθάπερ τοὺς παῖδας πρότερον μὲν αὐτοὶ διδάσκομεν, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ δι' ἑαυτῶν φθέγγεσθαι κελεύομεν λέγοντες· Τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς εἰρήνης αἰτήσατε, οἱ κατηχούμενοι. Ἔστι γὰρ ἄγγελος κόλασιν ἔχων, ὡς ὅταν λέγῃ· Ἀποστολὴν δι' ἀγγέλων πονηρῶν. Ἔστιν ὀλοθρευτής. Διὰ τοῦτο τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς εἰρήνης κελεύομεν αἰτεῖν, παιδεύοντες, ὃ πάντων ἐστὶ σύνδεσμος τῶν ἀγαθῶν, εἰρήνη, τοῦτο ζητεῖν, ὥστε πάσης ἀπηλλάχθαι μάχης, παντὸς πολέμου, πάσης στάσεως. Εἰρηνικὰ ὑμῖν πάντα τὰ προκείμενα. Κἂν γὰρ φορτικὸν ᾖ τι, εἰρήνην δὲ ἔχῃ, κοῦφόν ἐστι. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἔλεγεν· Εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν. Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὅπλον ἰσχυρὸν τῷ διαβόλῳ, ὡς μάχη καὶ ἔχθρα καὶ πόλεμος. Cf. R. F. Taft, *The Great Entrance: The History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-Anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1975) 316. On the dating of John Chrysostom's homilies, see J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. III (Westminster: Newman Press, 1950 [reprint, Westminster: Christian Classics, 1986]) 436 ff., esp. 445 and 448. See also, J. N. D. Kelley. *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 90–1.

[51] *Homily 3 on Colossians*, 3.4; *PG* 62. 322–3. Ἄκουε τοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγοντος· Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων. Οἱ γὰρ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν διαπαντὸς βλέπουσι

This is not *angelos* invocation of the type that we have examined on magical amulets, lamellae, lamps, and papyri. For instance, the catechumens do not adjure *angeloi* to do their bidding. The amuletic and liturgical invocations are, however, comparable in that the catechumens do ask for the aid of a specific *angelos* called the "angel of peace," in much the same way as the amuletic invocations call upon particular archangels by name. As R. F. Taft has suggested, it is probable that the catechumens invoked this *angelos* because the catechumenate was believed to be particularly vulnerable to demonic attack.[52] Thus, the *angelos* of peace would thwart Satan and his host, who struggled to gain the souls of the catechumens before they were initiated into the Christian Church through the rite of baptism.

John refers to liturgical practices at Antioch and Constantinople, so we cannot be certain that prayers for a specific *angelos* were part of the liturgy in southwest Asia Minor. However, John's homilies speak of the prayers to the "angel of peace" as though they were common practice in eastern Mediterranean urban centers. It would seem likely then that similar prayers for the aid of *angeloi* would have been part of liturgies in the area of Laodicea. Thus, based on John's statements, we can see in what manner it would have been permissible for Christians to "invoke" *angeloi* within the ecclesia.

τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Ἕκαστος γὰρ πιστὸς ἄγγελον ἔχει,ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἕκαστος ἀνὴρ τῶν εὐδοκίμων ἄγγελον εἶχε· καθώς φησιν ὁ Ἰακώβ, Ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ τρέφων με, καὶ ὁ ῥυόμενός με ἐκ νεότητός μου. Εἰ τοίνυν ἀγγέλους ἔχομεν, νήφωμεν, καθάπερ παιδαγωγῶν τινων ἡμῖν παρόντων· πάρεστι γὰρ καὶ δαίμων. Διὰ τοῦτο εὐχόμεθα, καὶ λέγομεν αἰτοῦντες τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς εἰρήνης, καὶ πανταχοῦ εἰρήνην αἰτοῦμεν. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ταύτης ἴσον· ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις εἰρήνην, ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς, ἐν ταῖς λιταῖς, ἐν ταῖς προσρήσεσι· καὶ ἅπαξ, καὶ δὶς, καὶ τρὶς, καὶ πολλάκις αὐτὴν δίδωσιν ὁ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας προεστὼς, Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν, ἐπιλέγων. Cf. Taft (1975) 318. On the date of the homilies on Colossians, see Quasten (1950) 448–9.

[52] Taft (1975) 320. Concerning the identity of the "angel of peace", Taft (1975) 318–9, notes that such an angel does not appear in the canonical New Testament and LXX. The "angel of peace" does appear, however, in the apocryphal *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, at Dan 6:5 and Asher 6:5–6. Taft entertains the suggestion, made by P. Glaue, that the "angel of peace" should be identified with the angel announcing the birth of Christ and the era of peace that Christ will bring (Luke 2:8–14). As Taft points out, it is also possible that the name has its origin in the understanding of Christ as angel, who is often given the title of "prince of peace" when he is depicted as the "angel of the great council" of Isaiah 9:5. On angel Christology more generally, see J. Barbel, *Christos Angelos* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1941) and C. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

The Shrines, Churches, and Miracles of Michael the Archangel

Theodoret's commentary on *Colossians* suggests that the Synod of Laodicea had little affect on the *angelos* worshipping tendencies of Christians living near Colossae. However, if we consider the type of *angelos* veneration that Theodoret refers to in the fifth century, and the intent of Laodicea's prohibition of *angelos* invocation, the image that emerges is not one of stubborn resistance to orthodoxy, as Theodoret implies. Rather, one sees the transformation of *angelos* invocation from something Laodicea considered a "secret idolatry" into something found to be acceptable in Christian shrines and churches. This is not apparent in Theodoret's commentary in part because his reference to Canon 35 of Laodicea is not entirely precise. Theodoret states that the Synod of Laodicea prohibited "praying to angels." As demonstrated above, this is only partly true. The Synod banned extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation, and the forming of groups outside of the church, which would perform such invocations in secret. This difference is critical for interpreting the Michael shrines that Theodoret refers to. If we, like Theodoret, understand the Synod of Laodicea to have banned prayer to angels in general, then we may follow Theodoret in his suggestion that the shrines of Michael indicate the inability of the Church to stop the "disease" of *angelos* worship. But, when one recognizes that the Synod of Laodicea specifically prohibited Christians from invoking *angeloi* in secret, away from the church, and in groups, then the existence of shrines to Michael in fifth-century Phrygia and Pisidia (southwest Anatolia) can be understood as part of the process of providing an acceptable space for *angelos* invocation, where the ritual power of such practices could support rather than undermine ecclesiastical authority. Thus, contra Theodoret, the Michael shrines do not represent the failure of Laodicea, but a realization of its intent.

Theodoret appears to have disapproved of the Michael shrines of his own day, but the veneration of Michael the Archangel at Christian shrines, chapels, oratories, or churches was not what concerned the fourth-century Synod of Laodicea. That Synod was concerned with forms of *angelos* invocation that could occur among groups of Christians organized to meet together in secret. The shrines that Theodoret refers to would appear to be the opposite of secret. Thus, the existence of shrines dedicated to Michael in the century following Laodicea's ban on extra-ecclesiastical *angelos* invocation speaks of a process by which

Church authorities discouraged the invocation of *angeloi* outside of the church, while encouraging Christians to venerate the archangel within shrines and churches. Recent studies of Christian authority over local, particularly rural, shrines and churches suggest that bishops and other central authorities may have had little supervision over the types of shrines Theodoret describes.[53] However, the existence of fifth-century shrines and basilicas dedicated to Michael in the region were the fourth-century Synod of Laodicea prohibited the "secret idolatry" of *angelos* invocation is suggestive of the process by which Christian authorities brought the ritual power of *angelos* invocation to the support of the Church.

Peter Brown's *Cult of the Saints* provides a helpful model for understanding the process by which *angelos* invocation was brought under Church authority.[54] Brown studied the process by which ecclesiastical authorities harnessed the ritual power of relics and shrines dedicated to saints and martyrs. He noted that such shrines formed an integral part of Christian piety in late antiquity and he noted that in Christian veneration of saints at such shrines we can see a convergence of popular Christian piety and official Christian religion.[55] As Brown demonstrated, the reason for this convergence is that Christian religious authorities realized the ritual power associated with the tombs and relics of the saints and acted to incorporate this ritual power within the church.[56] The existence of numerous shrines to Michael in fifth-century Anatolia is consistent with the appearance of numerous shrines dedicated to martyrs in the same period in other areas of the later Roman world. There is, however, one important difference between the shrines of the saints that Brown discusses and shrines dedicated to Michael the Archangel. The shrines of the saints focused on the physical remains or fragmentary relics of the saint. The location of the saintly remains became a holy *topos* where, as Brown puts it, "heaven

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[53] K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 189–202, et *passim*.

[54] P. Brown, *Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 1–49.

[55] Brown (1981) 8–10.

[56] Brown (1981) 7–12, 36–43. Brown notes, however, that while in western Christianity the power of local bishops was closely joined with the power of local shrines, in the Near East the power of local shrines was often independent of local bishops, pp. 9–10. For example, see Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 46–7, where the faithful (rather than the bishops) of Cyprus and Palestine debated where, respectively, the saint was interred. According to Jerome, miracles occurred at tombs in both locations.

and Earth met."[57] Heaven and earth met at the shrines of Michael as well, but it was not through the physical remains of the archangel, because such incorporeal beings could leave no remains. Rather the bridge between heaven and earth was forged through legends of the miracles and legends of the Archangel Michael.

In the previous chapter, I examined the healing spring at Chonae and its association with Michael the Archangel. The foundation legends of the shrine associated with that spring and its shrine is also germane to the present discussion of the development of acceptably Christian forms of *angelos* veneration. The earliest surviving redaction of the miracle stories of Michael dates to the eighth-century, but it seems likely that the stories of Michael's miracles at Colossae date from before the eighth century, perhaps as early as the fifth-century.[58] The text describes miracles associated with a shrine (εὐκτήριον) dedicated to Michael that must pre-date the large basilica dedicated to the archangel, known from later references, which was probably constructed in the mid-fifth century, or later.

The account of the miracles of Michael at Chonae can be briefly summarized as follows. The narrative begins in the apostolic age, when the apostles Philip and John visited Colossae and predicted that Michael would appear. Shortly after that a healing spring issued forth. Sometime later a man from Laodicea, having received a vision, took his deaf and dumb daughter to the spring where she was healed. In gratitude, the man then built a shrine (εὐκτήριον) to Michael on the spot. Ninety years later a hermit named Archippus came to the shrine and became its guardian for sixty years.[59] The local (non-Christian) population, however, wished to destroy the healing spring by polluting

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[57] Brown (1981) 10–2. For a more recent (post-Brown) assessment of early Christian conceptions of sacred space, see A. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. 14–45.

[58] M. Bonnet, ed. *Narratio de miraculo a Michaele Archangelo* in *Analecta Bollandiana* 8 (1889) 289–307; Bonnet dated the text between the fifth and seventh century, W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903) 465–80, noting that the toponyms employed in the text date from the eighth century (the miracles of Michael are said to take place at Chonae rather than Colossae), argued that the text should date no earlier than the ninth century. Peers (2001) 143, n. 41 notes that the eighth century is the terminus post quem and suggests that the redaction published by Bonnet probably dates from an eighth-century milieu. As Ramsay suggests (479), the later redaction probably has at its core an earlier miracle story, composed prior to the movement of the Colossian community to Chonae.

[59] As Ramsay (1903) 469, notes, the name probably comes from Col. 4:17, where Paul sates: "Say to Archippus, 'See that you complete the task that you have received in

its waters by diverting a nearby river into the spring. Archippus however, was able to entreat the Archangel Michael to come to the defense of the spring. Michael appeared and caused the river that the Hellenes had diverted to flow underground, thereby saving his shrine from destruction. The site thereafter was called Chonae, meaning "funnels," after Michael's "funneling" of the river underground.

G. Peers has argued that several elements in the miracle story functioned to make location of Michael's shrine sacred.[60] For instance, the name change from Colossae to Chonae happens as a result of Michael's appearance and miracles, and the presence of the healing spring at Chonae/Colossae continued to demonstrate the presence of the Archangel. *Angeloi*, as spiritual beings, could leave no physical remains or relics, so natural features such as miracle springs testified to their presence, making the shrine a holy *topos*, in Brown's terms. In such places the prayers of the faithful would have greater efficacy and the pious could entreat the powers of heaven at shrines designating a location where the archangel arrived and spanned the immense divide between heaven and earth. As in Jacob's dream, where the sleeper realized the location of gate of heaven through a vision of *angeloi* ascending and descending, the site of Michael's shrine rested on ground proven holy through the appearance of the *angelos* of God.[61]

It is probably the case, as Ramsay suggests, that this eighth-century text repeats the foundation legend of the great church of Michael the Archangel at Colossae, built sometime after the mid-fifth century. We should note that the text describes a shrine (εὐκτήριον) to Michael at Chonae/Colossae, reflecting the existence of smaller shrine(s) prior to the construction of the large church of Michael.[62] Thus, in the later redaction of the miracle story of Michael at Chonae, we probably have at least the kernel of the legend told about one of the εὐκτήρια of Michael that Theodoret refers to (with some scorn). The semantic range of the term εὐκτήριον, which Theodoret used to describe the shrines of Michael in mid-fifth century Phyrgia, allows one to entertain the possibility that Theodoret was referring to shrines within a

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the Lord'" (NRSV). Thus according to the miracle story, Archippus' task (unspecified by Paul) would be to tend to the shrine of Michael.

[60] Peers (2001) 143–51.

[61] Gen. 28:10–12.

[62] Ramsay (1903) plots the church of Michael on a map (inserted between pp. 472 and 473), in the vicinity of Colossae, north of the Lycus River, and states that the ruins of the Great Church of Michael were visible above the ground in 1881 (p. 479).

larger basilica.[63] However, it is more likely that Theodoret was referring to smaller, free-standing shrines, such as that described in the miracle story of Michael at Chonae. Thus, we should imagine the fifth-century landscape in Phyrgia as dotted with a number of small shrines dedicated to Michael the archangel, perhaps with similar fountains or springs that demonstrated the presence of the archangel.[64]

Although a large basilica of Michael the Archangel was reportedly built on the Bosphorus in the age of Constantine,[65] the earliest archaeological evidence for church structures dedicated to Michael in southwestern Asia Minor dates to the mid-fifth century, shortly after Theodoret commented on the numerous shrines dedicated to Michael. Cyril Mango in a study of (among other things) the likelihood that the cult of Michael at Germia (in Phrygia) replaced the Hellenistic and Roman cult of Attis, has discussed both the ruins of two Michael churches, approximately one-hundred kilometers from Colossae, and the literary evidence for dating them to the second-half of the fifth century.[66] Sources such as the eighth-century miracle story of Michael

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[63] G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1961–8), s.v. εὐκτήριος, B.4.b (neuter substantive), citing Theodoret. *Col* 2:18 (3.490).

[64] W. M. Calder, "A Journey round the Proseilemmene," *Klio* 10 (1910) 233–4, records a building inscription from Laodicea Combusta in which the Catharite bishop Eugenius describes re-building a church with a reservoir in the early fourth century (= *MAMA* I.170). F. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 151–2, has suggested that Eugenius's church contained a hagiasma similar to that at Chonae/Colossae. One should note however that Trombley apparently confuses Laodicea ad Lycum with Laodicea Combusta, leading his readers to believe that Chonae/Colossae was "near" Eugenius' church (153). It is in fact over 150 kilometers away. W. M. Ramsay, *Luke the Physician* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908) 154, sensibly suggests that Eugenius' pool was a cistern used to store water in an arid land. Cf. S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men and the Gods in Asia Minor*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 82, 100–1.

[65] Sozomen 2.3.

[66] C. Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Deltion tis Christianikis Etaipeias* 12 (1984) 39–62. As Mango demonstrates (pp. 45–6), Byzantine literary sources attribute the construction of two churches of Michael to one Studius, who is also credited with building the church of St. John in Constantinople. Mango refers to an epigram in the Palatine Anthology, I.4 [= *Greek Anthology*, trans. W. R. Patton. Loeb Classic Library (1916) Vol. 1, I.4.], which states that Studius was awarded with a consulship for having financed the construction of the church of St. John. Studius' consulship was in 454, a date which therefore should, as Mango has indicated, serve as the terminus ante quem for Studius's church of St. John. Two churches of Michael are also attributed to the same Studius. The first, at Nakoleia (modern Seyitgazi) is attributed to John by the Suda. The second, at Germia (modern Yürme), is attributed to John by an eighth century account of the miracles of Michael by Patoleon. Mango's study describes his visits to the remains of these churches. Those at Germia were still partially standing in 1984,

at Colossae, and literary references to a great pilgrimage church of Michael at Colossae/Chonae in the twelfth century suggest that a large basilica was constructed at Colossae in approximately the later half of the fifth century as well.[67]

When we consider that the fifth-century shrines dedicated to Michael served to incorporate the popular cult of *angeloi* within the church in an acceptably Christian form, we arrive at an answer to a question posed by Mango concerning the church of Michael in Constantinople "how is it then that the Michaelion with its supernatural manifestations and cures by incubation, was tolerated at the very time that the Church laid stress on condemning the worship of angels and the dedication of churches to them?"[68] Mango's question (to which he posed no answer) suggests that there was a conflict of ideas between churches dedicated to Michael and the Church's opposition to *angelos* veneration. However, the two apparently conflicting ideas are in fact reconcilable when we consider that Laodicea did not condemn *angelos* veneration in general but only *angelos* invocation practiced in secret, away from the church. The Michaelion, and other publicly known shrines and churches dedicated to Michael the Archangel, would seem to be the opposite of the "secret idolatry" anathematized at Laodicea. In addition, the churches dedicated to Michael allowed the Christian Church to benefit from the ritual power associated with the archangel as well as oversee the religious practices of those Christians venerating Michael at his church or shrine.

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and seem to conform to a construction date in the mid-fifth century. At Nakoleia, the remains of a fifth-century basilica appear to have been incorporated into an Ottoman period monastery for Bektasi dervishes, which may rest on top of the site of the fifth century church of Michael (45–55).

[67] However, the physical remains at Colossae do not at present aid in dating the construction of the large basilica known from later literary sources: see above, n. 79. On the medieval church of Michael the Archangel as a great pilgrimage site, see S. Vyronis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) 22, n. 112.

[68] Mango (1984) 60. Mango refers to the church of Michael on the Bosporus, said to the built by Constantine (Sozomen 2.3). Mango does not answer this question, but suggests that Constantine may have ordered the church to be built after his defeat of Licinius in 324. Mango also suggests that perhaps Constantine even claimed for his own the angelic vision that Licinius had ten years prior (313), after his defeat of Maximinus Daia (Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 46).

Conclusion

The story of the Miracles of Michael at Chonae in its eighth-century redaction records instructions for proper *angelos* veneration that serve as a fitting conclusion to this chapter. The story is meant to demonstrate the proper way for Christians to venerate *angeloi*, as Michael is careful to state that his power comes from God, and it not his own to use at will.[69] In the miracle story, a pagan from Laodicea who seeks healing for his deaf and dumb daughter is instructed by those at the shrine of Michael to ask for healing with the following statement, "O Father, O Son, O Holy Ghost, through the ministry of Michael, help me, a sinful person."[70] The man then poured water into his daughter's mouth while stating, "God of the Christians your power is Great, Michael Archistrategos."[71] The second statement could be taken to imply that Michael is equivalent to God, but the prior invocation makes it clear that the idolatrous man was instructed to invoke the intercession of Michael in order to gain access to God. In addition, and most importantly, the invocation formula invokes the three persons of the trinity as distinct from Michael the archangel. The formula is one of impeccable orthodoxy. The scene is one that instructs Christians in the proper invocation of the archangel. The invocation takes place at a shrine of Michael, a predecessor of the fifth-century basilica. The invocation makes it clear that the power to heal comes not through Michael's power, but from his ability to communicate with God.

Theodoret, in his commentary on *Colossians* 2:18 noted that the "disease" of *angelos* veneration remained in Phrygia and Pisidia long after the author of *Colossians* gave his warning against the "worship of angels." In noting the tenacity of angel veneration in southwestern Anatolia, Theodoret equates the "worship of angels" of *Colossians*, the "secret idolatry" of angel invocation prohibited by the Synod of Laodicea, and the existence of Michael shrines in fifth-century Anatolia. However, these instances of angel veneration are distinct and reveal

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[69] Peers (2001) 151, has stated concerning the miracle story of Michael at Chonae, "The aim of the miracle story of Chonae…was to provide a model for imitation in veneration and a confirmation of the proximity off the archangel at a given site." Peers suggests (correctly) that the miracle story of Michael is not about images, the focus of Peers' study. See also Ramsay (1903) 478–80.

[70] Bonnet (1889) 289–307; *Nar. de mir. Mich. Arch.* 4.11–13. Trans. Peers (2001) 146.

[71] *Nar. de mir. Mich. Arch.* 4.15–16; Peers (2001) 146.

the process by which Christian authorities prohibited potentially secretive and heterodox forms of angel invocation, while permitting prayer to *angeloi*, such as Michael, within churches and shrines. The existence of shrines and churches dedicated to the Archangel Michael in fifth-century Anatolia does not represent the failure of Laodicea, as Theodoret implies. Rather, the existence of such structures demonstrates the result of a policy of prohibiting secretive *angelos* invocation while allowing more its more public forms at churches and shrines.

CONCLUSION

While Jewish and Christian scriptures refer to *angeloi*, and such beings feature prominently in Jewish and Christian literature in the Roman period, the belief in, and veneration of, *angeloi* was not limited to Judaism and Christianity. Rather, otherworldly messengers designated by the term *angelos* (Latin: *angelus*) were also a feature of Roman-era cosmological speculation and belief, and the objects of religious piety, outside of Christianity and Judaism. This study has sought to bring to light this aspect of late Roman religion, one that is discussed among a few specialists, but typically does not enter scholarly or popular discourse about Roman religion, early Christianity, or angels.

Although conceptions of *angeloi* differed among the various regions and religions of the Empire, one common feature among these invocations is their shared use of the Greek term *angelos* to express the concept of a mediator between the heavenly and the mundane. The manner in which distinctly regional cults, such as those of Zeus Hypsistos, Mên, Hosios and Dikaios, and the All-Seeing Aether, and Ilaalge used the same term to invoke and pray to *angeloi* reveals the role of Hellenism in allowing distinct and divergent religious traditions to express similar ideas about *angeloi* in a common religious vocabulary. Such a universal means of expression is most evident in the inscribed invocations to *angeloi* that devotees of Syrian gods erected outside of their homeland. Although the *angeloi* they referred to were associated with Syrian gods, the language in which they expressed their religious devotion was common to regional cults in Asia Minor as well as cosmopolitan philosophers such as Celsus and Porphyry.

The inscriptions and literary evidence examined in this study suggest that the belief in and invocation of *angeloi* was not limited to the circles of the philosophical elite. Rather, *angeloi* appear to have been an integral part of several popular religious traditions. Furthermore, the oracular inscription at Oenoanda suggests that as least one ancient mouthpiece of the Hellenic gods was advocating a henotheistic theology in which *angeloi* played a critical role in communicating between a supreme god and the faithful. Inscribed, public dedications to *angeloi* suggest that in some religious traditions the immediacy of *angeloi* made them objects of popular veneration. Thus, conceptions

of celestial *angeloi* were not the exclusive concern of a few philosophically minded residents of the Empire. *Angeloi* were part of a late Roman understandingof the fabric of cosmos and significant aspect of popular piety in the era.

Perhap because of their perceived immediacy and power, *angeloi* became popular objects of prayer and personal invocation, as revealed by the inscriptions on numerous dedications such as the lamps from Corinth, amulets from Asia Minor, and the curse tablet from the Fons Anna Perenna. The texts that accompany these invocations indicate that Romans invoked *angeloi* for beneficial, as well as neferious, purposes. The use of amulets to invoke *angeloi* for personal protection suggests that, on the one hand, *angeloi* were believed to have powers that were indipendent of geography. On the other hand, the popularity of locations like Mamre and the Fountain of the Lamps suggests that some sites were believed to be more effective for *angelos* invocation. The language of dedications to *angeloi* from Stratonikeia and Phrygia, and the partilarites of sites like Mamre and Chonae, reveal that *angelos* veneration could be distinctively local. At the same time, the shared use of the term *angelos* and *angelus* to describe mediators between the physical and spiritual worlds was cosmopolitan.

Some of the features of Roman-era *angelos* veneration contributed to what, in time, became the normative form of orthodox Christian angel veneration. The existence of speculation and religious beliefs about *angeloi* outside of Christianity facilitated the communication of Christian ideas about such beings to non-Christians. However, non-Christian beliefs about, and veneration of, *angeloi* also resulted in Christian authorities distinguishing between orthodox and non-orthodox attitudes towards *angeloi*. The last two chapters of the present study discussed some of the early forms of those distinctions in belief and ritual in the fourth and fifth centuries. Those distinctions were, of course, just the beginning. In the early centuries of the Middle Ages, the accumulation of those distinctions resulted in the articulation of distinctively Christian legends about, and depictions of, *angeloi*, eventually forming the basis of the literary and visual portraits that most readers will imagine when they encounter the word "angel."

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